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Alfonzo Greene, Jr.
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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

[BLACK] REGIONAL CONFERENCES IN THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
CHURCH (SDA) COMPARED WITH UNITED METHODIST [BLACK]
CENTRAL JURISDICTION/ANNUAL CONFERENCES WITH WHITE S.D.A.
CONFERENCES, FROM 1940-2001

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN HISTORY

BY

ALFONZO GREENE, JR.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

DECEMBER 2009

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	vi
ABSTRACT	vii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I: Historical Background of Pioneers In The Black Work, and The	
Progression To [Black] Regional Conferences.....	15
Organization and Organizational Structure of the SDA Church	21
Black Millerite Preachers.....	24
Charles Bowles and John W. Lewis	24
William Ellis Foy.....	25
Ellen Harmon White and Her Position on Issues Impacting The Black SDA Work.....	26
Ellen White and a Separate Work.....	39
Leaders in the Black Work in the South after Slavery	41
Robert M. Kilgore.....	43
Charles M. Kinney.....	47
James Edson White.....	51
The Major Actions Leading to the Establishment of [Black]	
Regional Conferences	56
Negro Department-Lack of Black Representation	60
Schism Involving Leading Black Ministers Lewis C. Sheafe, John W. Mann, and James K. Humphrey.....	62
Lewis C. Sheafe	62
John W. Manns	73
Historical Overview	79
James Kemuel Humphrey.....	81
Structural Changes in the SDA Church	93
White Leaders Reject Idea of [Black] Regional Conferences	97
Historical Overview	99
Conclusion	102
The Lucy Byard Incident	103
The Committee for the Advancement of a World-wide Work among Colored Seventh-day Adventist.....	104
Regional Conference – Introduced	106
CHAPTER II: The Historical Background of Methodism in America	
Methodists and Slavery and Blacks in the United Methodist Church.....	109
Historical Overview	116

Methodism, Slavery and Blacks in the Methodist Episcopal Church.....	120
Historical Overview	126
The Pioneers in Ministry to Black Methodist	128
Harry Hosier	128
Henry Evans	132
John Stewart	134
William Capers	141
Historical Overview.....	146
Methodist Retreat on the Slavery Issue	150
The General Council Confronts Slavery Issue	154
Historical Overview.....	159
A Period of Change in the Methodist-Episcopal Church North and South..	163
The Establishment of Black Annual Conferences	166
The Freedman Aid Society and the Women’s Home Missionary Society ...	168
Historical Overview.....	169
The First Black Bishops.....	176
Women in Ministry.....	177
Historical Overview.....	177
Debate over Reunification of the Methodist Church	183
The Establishment of the Central Jurisdiction.....	184
A Period of Proclamation, 1944-1956	188
Historical Overview	189
Abolition of the Central Jurisdiction	195
Historical Overview	197
The Creation of the United Methodist Church	202
Conclusion	203

CHAPTER III: [Black] Regional SDA Conferences Compared to [Black]

Central Jurisdiction/Annual Conferences With White SDA Conferences	207
The “Dialectical Model”	211
Historical Overview	221
Church Growth and Development of the Membership of the [Black] Central	
Jurisdiction of the Methodist Church	224
Differences in the Perspective between the United Methodist Church	
and the Seventh-day Adventist Church	231
Edward Earl Cleveland: Major Act in Church Growth and Development ...	235
Historical Overview	239
Church Growth and Development of Membership Income and Tithe Funds.....	249
Historical Overview	257
[Black] SDA Regional Conferences Compared With White SDA Conferences....	264
New [Black] Regional Conferences Retirement Compared with	
North American Division White Conferences Retirement	273

A Comparison of NAD Sustentation Program and the Regional Conference New Retirement Plan	275
Conclusion.....	277
CHAPTER IV: Black Methodist For Church Renewal Compared With The Sixteen Point Program	282
Issues involved in the Organizing of Black Methodist for Church Renewal	283
Issues Involved In The Sixteen Points Program Adapted To The North American Division Of Seventh-Day Adventist Church	290
Historical Overview.....	300
Results of the Sixteen Points Program at the General Council and North American Divisions Echelons from 1970-2001	306
Results of the Sixteen Points Program in Unions of the North American Division from 1970-2001	308
A Comparison of United Methodists and Seventh-day Adventist Churches	310
Historical Overview	314
The Commission on the Status and Role of Women Compared with the SDA Church and the Sixteen Points Program	318
Conclusion.....	324
CHAPTER V: Conclusion	327
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	365
VITA	383

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
Table 1: Growth and Development of Membership.....	254
Table 2: Income and Tithe Funds.....	256
Table 3: Growth and Development of Membership.....	267
Table 4: Tithe Funds.....	269
Table 5: Growth and Development of Membership.....	271
Table 6: Tithe Funds.....	273

ABSTRACT

This study compares the historical development of [Black] Regional Conferences in the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church with [Black] Central Jurisdiction/Black Annual Conferences in Methodism (now known as the United Methodist Church) and White SDA Conferences—specifically through the prism of race, religion, and to a lesser degree gender. Secondly, emphasis is given to the salient events surrounding [Black] Regional SDA Conferences and [Black] Methodist Central Jurisdiction/Annual Conferences, and White SDA Conferences in order to discern the thread of historical development that emerged in these religious entities. What were the reasons the Methodist and Seventh-day Adventists decided it was essential to set up a separate organization structure for Blacks in 1864, 1939, and 1944/1945? Three pivotal areas selected for particular scrutiny in this study are church growth, financial concerns, and self-determination. Emphasis will be given to the ways in which [Black] Regional SDA Conferences have functioned compared with the [Black] Central Jurisdiction/Annual Conferences and White SDA Conferences, 1940 to 2001. The hypothesis of this study is that the cultural pluralism model is superior to the cultural assimilation model. In addition to the comparative nature of this study, it is also heuristic and descriptive.

INTRODUCTION

In their profound study, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, authors C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya dispelled the notion that Black religion and the Black religious experience is but a duplication of the White experience. Lincoln and Mamiya asserted that a qualitative distinction in the cultural expression of Christianity has existed in many Black churches despite denominational affiliation.¹ Religion emerged as an important component of the African American experience in America and the intersection of race and religion continues to influence the dynamics of Black life. This study examines race and religion by contrasting the United Methodist Church cultural assimilation method with the Seventh-day Adventist Church cultural pluralistic method.

Lincoln and Mamiya indicated:

The prevailing American sentiment has traditionally held that the mainline white churches constitute the only relevant spiritual pulse in the nation, and that whatever is outside this narrow ambit is of little if any significance to the American religious profile. This conventional wisdom is widely reflected in seminary curricula and denominational policies to the end that misperception is compounded, and the religious experience of some 30 to 35 million African Americans is clouded in consequence.... Our basic premise has been that Black religion whatever its distinctive expressions, is significantly part and parcel of the American experience in religion and to exclude it arbitrarily from the normative study of religion in America run the risk of a seriously distorted picture of what American religion is like.²

¹ C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1990), 7.

² *Ibid.*, XI-XII.

Both Lincoln and Mamiya have shown the importance of widespread study of various aspects of religions and denominations in American society. They have suggested that whatever the distinction in expression in Black religion in America, these differences need to be examined. Otherwise, Lincoln and Mamiya stated one would have an erroneous perspective of American religious life.

Thus, the historical overview of the seven major Black denominations (National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc., the National Baptist Convention of America, the Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc., African Methodist Episcopal Church, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church and the Church of God in Christ, Inc. (Pentecostal)) indicates these seven Black denominations comprise more than 80 percent of all Black Christians. The remaining 14-20 percent of Black Christians is spread among smaller Black denominations and predominant White denominations.³ The following introduction is given concerning the Black Baptist, Methodist, and Pentecostal denominations as well as the Seventh-day Adventists, one of the predominantly White denominations in the United States, only with a Black membership.

Both the Baptist movement and the Methodist in the United States had its roots in England, even though the Baptist predates the Methodist by a century. The initial Baptists developed from a cluster of Puritans constrained to grab shelter in Holland as a consequence of persecution in their own land. The Separatist Puritans became convinced that only baptism of adult adherents and baptism by immersion were proper tenets. The Separatists rubbed shoulders with the Anabaptists who provided prominence to the

³ *Ibid.*, XII, 1.

concept of the separation of church and state. In 1609, the Separatists created the initial English Baptist Church.⁴

The American Baptist movement evolved in the colonies during this time period as a movement from England and was connected with the coming of Puritan Roger Williams in 1631. Williams received a franchise from the British monarch to form the Rhode Island colony. The first Baptist Church was established in Providence, Rhode Island in 1639. In 1707 the Baptist Churches in Rhode Island and in the Middle Colonies combined to form the Philadelphia Baptist Association. The increase in the Baptist movement was attributable in large proportion to the influence of the First Great Awakening which made large numbers of people responsive to the Baptist message. The First Great Awakening caused the Baptists to be separated into two well-defined groups, the New Lights and Old Lights, ('New Light' Baptists were more extreme in their doctrinal emphases and the functional tactics of revivalism; while the 'Old Light' Baptists were more moderate in their doctrinal requirements and traditional in their rituals of worship.) However, 'New Light' and 'Old Light' Baptists put aside their differences and united in missionary endeavors in the southern states to reach slaves and introduce them to evangelical Christianity.⁵

The first Black Baptist, named Quassey, was on the membership rolls of the Newton, Rhode Island, church in 1743. The Providence, Rhode Island, Baptist Church had nineteen Black members in 1762. Blacks were received into the membership of the

⁴ Mechal Sobel, *Trabelin' On: The Slave Journey to an Afro-Baptist Faith* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1979), 2, 5.

⁵ Leroy Fitts, *A History of Black Baptists* (Nashville: Broadman, 1985), 5-10, 94.

First Baptists Church of Boston in 1772. However, the overwhelming number of Black Baptist resided in the South.⁶

Due to the attempted slave rebellion led by Gabriel Prosser in 1800, the Denmark Vesey uprising of 1822, and the Nat Turner insurrection of 1831, greater and harsher limitations were placed on religious functions to the point that self-determination became an epitaph especially for southern Black churches. The circumstances of African Americans further deteriorated when the Baptists divided in 1845 over the matter of slavery. However, the Black Baptist membership increased to 150,000 by 1850 and to almost 500,000 by 1870 as independent churches multiplied rapidly with the destruction of the institution of slavery.⁷

The early nineteenth century witnessed African Americans Baptist in the North and South heading toward racially segregated churches as a result not of doctrinal disputes, but as dissent in opposition to unfair treatment to curb discriminatory practices. The departure of African American Baptists from White churches during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century made it simpler for Black Baptists than other groups such as Black Methodists in forming their own churches while the establishment of a national denomination was much harder for Black Baptists than for Black Methodists.⁸

Between 1815 and 1895, a large number of Black Baptists labored through the national White Baptist Association, the American Baptist Union, via their own affiliation

⁶ Miles Mark Fisher, "What is a Negro Baptist?" *The Home Mission College Review* 1 (May 1927): 1-2.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 2, 4-5.

⁸ *Ibid.*

with the African Baptist Missionary Society. The meeting convened in Atlanta on September 28, 1895, and with more than 500 delegates establishing the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., it became the first distinctly Black Baptist denomination. In 1915, due to differences with the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., led to the formation of the National Baptist Convention of America. The Progressive National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc. was created in 1961 as a consequence of contention with the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc.⁹

Of the three major Black Baptist Conventions in which the overwhelming number of Black Baptists belong the largest is the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc. The National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc. is regarded as the biggest African American denomination with 7.5 million members. The National Baptist Convention of America is the second biggest of the three African American conventions with 2.4 million members and the third biggest Black denomination. The Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc. is the smallest of the three National Baptist Conventions' with 1.2 million members. Black Baptists formed the earliest churches and remain the largest number of Black Christians.¹⁰

The Methodist movement at its inception, so designated because of the unique methods of unification and structure with spiritual regulations was started as a Holy Club of students at Oxford University in the mid 1720's by John and Charles Wesley. John

⁹ Fitts, *A History of Black Baptist*, 94; James M. Washington, *Frustrated Fellowship: The Black Baptist Quest for Social Power* (Macon, GA.: Mercer University Press, 1986), 195-196.

¹⁰ Charles Hamilton, *The Black Preacher in America* (New York: William Marrow, 1972), 159-163; Fitts, *A History of Black Baptist*, 98-105; Charles Butler, "PNBC: A Fellowship of Partners," *The Crisis*, 89 no. 9 (November 1982): 44-45.

Wesley had no plans of establishing a distinct denomination. In the beginning, the specialness of his service and systemization, along with a rebuff by the Anglican Church, resulted in the formation of a distinguished Protestant organization. The Methodist movement arrived in America from across the Atlantic in the mid 1730's.¹¹

The First Great Awakening in the 1740's and the resistance of Methodist to slavery was conveyed formally in the initial General Rules written by Wesley in 1743 and in the rules voted at the 1784 Christmas Conference. The anti-slavery position by Methodists lured Blacks, whether slaves or free, into the ranks of the church. Methodism called Blacks to encounter the Second Great Awakening and to actively oppose the slavery system. Methodism also provided the inspiration for Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, along with other African American worshippers, to withdraw from St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia after being forced off their knees in a worship gallery due to the racial profiling of them. In 1786, a year before Allen and Jones' departure, the Methodist Episcopal Church had 1,890 Black members comprising about ten percent of its overall membership.¹²

In April, 1787, a mutual aid society referred to as the Free African Society was created by Richard Allen and Absalom Jones for benevolent purposes and was devoid any religious beliefs. The Free African Society in Philadelphia which produced the Bethel Church was duplicated by a number of other groups in nearby places developed

¹¹ Arnold Nash, "Methodism: The England in which John Wesley Came," *In Methodism*, 2nd edition, ed. William K. Anderson (Nashville: The Methodist Publishing House, 1947), 20-27.

¹² Harry W. Richardson, *Dark Salvation: The Story of Methodism as It Developed Among Blacks in America* (Garden City, NY.: Anchor Press, 1976), 284, 294-295, 70-75.

into Black Methodist churches. After a few years, following a discussion among the various churches regarding mutual irritations and strife with White Methodists concerning property rights and appointments of clergy, elected delegates from five churches assembled at the Bethel Church in 1816 (1,066 withdrawing) to legally establish the African Methodist Episcopal Church [A.M.E.]. Richard Allen at the same gathering was elected bishop of this first independent Black denomination. In 1830, Allen established the first Black conventions for the intention of collaboration by Black church leaders to address the bitter matter of slavery and abolitionist activity.¹³

Similar to the A.M.E. Church, the A.M.E. Zion Church had its roots in the late eighteenth century where a group of African American members severed ties from the White dominated John Street Methodist Episcopal Church in New York City. In 1796, a number of Black members established an African chapel, while a new church facility was erected. The chapel was incorporated as the African Methodist Episcopal Church [known as Zion] of the City of New York. In 1816, the New York Methodist Episcopal Conference formed a separate 'circuit charge' [or local district] comprising the Zion Church in New York City. Due to some internal conflict and tensions with the A.M.E.s or Allenites, on June 21, 1821 the Zionist delegates from Philadelphia, Long Island (New York), and New Haven (Connecticut), 1,406 Methodist Episcopal Black members withdrew and convened a meeting and established the African Methodist Episcopal Zion [A.M.E.Z.] denomination. In 1822, at its first General Conference session, James Varick,

¹³ *Ibid.*, 72, 94-95.

the pastor of Zion Church, was elected the first bishop and Varick is considered as the founder of the church denomination.¹⁴

Distinct from the Blacks of the A.M.E. and A.M.E.Z. churches in the North, which had associations with the northern Methodist Episcopal Church, African Americans in the South who had been members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South [M.E.C.S.] were endorsed by the M.E.C.S. to establish a separate denomination, the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, [C.M.E.]. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South was the stem of southern White Methodism that resulted from the division of Methodism in 1844 concerning the matter of slavery. In 1866, after the Civil War, a group of African American Methodist petitioned the General Conference of the M.E.C.S. in New Orleans for their honorable discharge, absent any enmity, while Whites wanted to rid themselves of the African American constituency, which they overwhelmingly voted to accomplish.¹⁵

In the intervening years 1867 and 1870 Blacks were ordained to the ministry to oversee Black churches and eight Black Annual Conferences were established in Tennessee, Kentucky, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, Alabama, Arkansas, and Texas. In 1870, the first General Conference was conducted in Jackson, Tennessee and the Colored Methodist Episcopal denomination sprang into existence. Two African American bishops were elected. Both men, William H. Miles and Richard H.

¹⁴ William J. Walls, *The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church: Reality of the Black Church* (Charlotte, N.C.: AME Zion Publishing House, 1974), 49-50, 58.

¹⁵ Hunter D. Farish, *The Circuits Riders Dismounts: A Social History of Southern Methodist* (Richmond, VA.: The Dietz Press, 1938), 168-170.

Vanderhorst, were former slaves. In 1954, (the year of *Brown v. Board of Topeka* Kansas decision) the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, wanting to alter the perception of being racially exclusive, changed its name from Colored Methodist Episcopal Church to Christian Methodist Episcopal to indicate the church was inclusive.¹⁶

Of the three major Black Methodist denominations mentioned, the African Methodist Episcopal Church is the largest of African American with a 1990 membership in the United States of 2.2 million. The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church is the second largest of the Black Methodist denominations with a 1990 membership of 1.2 million in the U.S. The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church was the smallest of the three Black Methodist denominations with a 1990 membership of 900,000 in the United States.¹⁷

As Methodism was initially connected to the Puritan movement in the Anglican Church, Holiness started as a reform movement within Methodism. From the 1840's and 1850's the Wesleyan doctrine of perfection or sanctification made the Methodist distinct and became extensive among the various denominations, due in great measure to the revivals and camp meetings of the Second Great Awakening. The Holiness movement commenced from 1867 as a segment of Methodism which created the 'National Camp Meetings Association for the Promotion of Holiness.'¹⁸

¹⁶ Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, 54, 58, 63.

¹⁷ C. Eric Lincoln, *Heritage and Hope: The African-American Presence in United Methodism*, ed. Grant S. Shockley (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 17-18, 49.

¹⁸ Catherine L. Albanese, *America: Religion and Religions* (Belmont, CA.: Wadsworth Publishing,

Both Blacks and Whites were wrapped up in the Holiness movement. Therefore, Blacks and Whites were attracted to the Azusa Street Revival conducted in Los Angeles from 1906 to 1909, led by William J. Seymour, an African American Holiness minister. The Holiness and Pentecostal movement was different from that of the Black Baptists and Methodists, who sketch their beginnings not to White denominations, but to a movement started and headed by an African American preacher. Also distinct from African American Baptists and Methodists, the Black Pentecostals were initially connected to an unique interracial movement.¹⁹

The Church of God in Christ, Inc., (COGIC) was established at the turn of the century as a direct result of the Holiness movement. In Memphis, Tennessee, the COGIC was founded by Charles Mason, a former Baptist preacher. Charles Mason held the initial Pentecostal General Assembly of COGIC, and was accompanied by delegates of twelve churches in Memphis, in November, 1907. Therefore, this date came to be viewed as the official date for the establishment of the COGIC denomination.²⁰

The COGIC was the only incorporated Pentecostal denomination from 1907 to 1914. It served as the sole ecclesiastical power to which self-governing White Pentecostal churches could petition. As a result, numerous White preachers were ordained by Mason and were officially described as Church of God in Christ preachers. Unfortunately, the Pentecostal movement surrendered to the secular order of endorsing segregation. It was

1981), 105-106, 126-127, 232-233.

¹⁹ Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 2 vols. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1972), 2:576.

²⁰ Anquett Fuslier, ed., "The Divine Origins of Church of God in Christ," *The Cornerstone* (1985), 32-33.

the men ordained by Mason who formed the largest White Pentecostal denomination, the Assemblies of God, in 1914. The short interracial interludes of Black and White Pentecostals concluded in 1924. The Church of God in Christ membership in 1990 was 3.5 million, making it the largest Black Pentecostal denomination.²¹

The seven African American denominations described pertain to more than 80 percent of Black religious organizations in America. Most, if not all of these Black denominations have been researched extensively in journal articles and books. In this study, a segment of the other 14 percent of Blacks in predominantly White affiliations, mainly Black local churches and Black Annual Conferences in the predominantly White Methodist Church and United Methodist Church will be explored in comparison to [Black] Regional Conferences and White SDA Conferences in the predominantly White sector of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United States of America.²² A short overview of the origin and the development of the overall SDA Church organization which later results in [Black] SDA Regional Conferences is provided for perusal.

The Millerite Movement developed during the Second Great Awakening with an American farmer and Baptist preacher, William Miller, who proclaimed the imminent advent of Christ on October 22, 1844. African American Millerite ministers who played an important role in preaching the gospel prior to “the Great Disappointment” were Charles Bowes, John L. Lewis, and William Ellis Foy. After “the Great Disappointment” on October 22, 1844, when Christ did not return, the Millerite Movement divided up into

²¹ Vincent Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1971), 8; Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, 77.

²² Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, 1.

three different groups. One of the smaller groups that maintained the reliability of 1844 date, with a re-interpretation of its meaning, was the forerunner of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.²³

The formation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church occurred with a General Conference session being held on May 20-23, 1863 in Battle Creek, Michigan. Twenty delegates were in attendance from New York, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota. At the time of the General Conference session in 1863, there were 3,500 members, 22 ordained ministers, eight licensed ministers, and 125 churches. Two of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, James and Ellen G. White were converts from the Methodist Church to the Millerite Movement.²⁴

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was distinct from the Methodist Episcopal Church, in it promoted a policy of establishing separate churches for African Americans rather than segregated worship services in the same building in order to overcome the bias against Blacks. As a result of the efforts to recruit Blacks as ministers to work for African Americans, Charles M. Kinney became the first Black SDA ordained to the ministry in 1889. Kinney suggested that in addition to separate churches that separate conferences be formed for Blacks and Whites. Kinney foresaw [Black] Regional Conferences about fifty five years prior to their occurrence. Like [Black] Annual Conferences initially in the Methodist Episcopal Church and Methodist Church, the

²³ Francis D. Nichol, *The Midnight Cry* (Washington, DC : Review and Herald, 1944), 188; Leroy Frooms, *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, 4 vols. Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1945), 1:705; “William Ellis Foy”, *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 2 vols. (Commentary Reference Service, vols. 10-11, revised edition, 1996), 10: 563-564.

²⁴ John Byington, “Report of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists,” *Review and Herald* (May 26, 1863), 206; “Ellen Gould Harmon White,” *SDA Encyclopedia*, 11: 873-874.

[Black] Regional Conferences would possess the same status and relationship as White [Methodist] Annual Conferences and White SDA Conferences to the church organization.²⁵

In this research, two significant models will be compared, those of cultural pluralism and cultural assimilation. A historical overview of the seven major Black denominations (the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc., the National Baptist Convention of America, the Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc., African Methodist Episcopal Church, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church and the Church of God in Christ, Inc. (Pentecostal)) has shown that these seven denominations have utilized the cultural pluralistic model which has resulted in a large increase in membership in contrast to a cultural assimilation model practiced in some predominately White denominations which resulted in many cases in a significant decline in Black and White membership. The cultural assimilation model presents the prospective in which racial and/or ethnic groups should be blended together and much of the differences assimilated into the predominately White culture. Cultural pluralism suggests that different racial and/or ethnic groups in society have mutual respect for one another's culture and be permitted to express their culture and not be subject to bias or antagonism.

In this study, the African American segment of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Church, and the United Methodist Church will be compared with the

²⁵ John. H. Graham, *Black United Methodists: Retrospect and Prospect* (New York: Vantage Press, 1979), 90; Arthur W. Spalding, *Origins and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, 4 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1961), 2: 187-188; "Charles M. Kinnney" *SDA Encyclopedia*, 10: 871; *Minutes of District Workers' Meeting*, Nashville, Tennessee, SDA Campmeeting Campground, October 2, 1889; *Minutes, Pre-Spring Council*, Chicago, Illinois (April 8, 1944), 4-5.

African American sector of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA) in the areas of membership growth rate and Income and Tithe Funds, as well as other areas. The [Black] SDA Regional Conferences will be compared with White SDA Conferences in the areas of membership growth rate and Tithe Funds. It is necessary to indicate that the Black and White membership of the United Methodist Church plummeted between 1968 and 1991 and the Black and White membership in the SDA Church increased significantly between 1966 and 1990. The cultural pluralistic approach of the SDA Church will be compared with the cultural assimilation approach of the United Methodist Church to determine which approach is the best.

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PIONEERS IN THE BLACK WORK, AND THE PROGRESSION TO [BLACK] REGIONAL CONFERENCES

The period from the commencement of the Millerite Movement in 1834 to the early period of the Adventist Movement in 1845/1846 showed that African-Americans played a significant role in presenting the gospel throughout America. Black Millerite preachers who were prominent and instrumental before “the Great Disappointment” were Charles Bowes, John L. Lewis, and William Ellis Foy. Among the Black and White pioneers we will scrutinize in regards to the outreach to Blacks in America are Robert M. Kilgore, James Edison White, and Charles M. Kinney. I will examine the role of Ellen G. White in stimulating the establishment of an effort to reach Blacks and also to address the underlying principles and strategies she utilized in achieving her objectives. This chapter also explores the reason why the SDA Church moved away from primarily integrated worship services and church facilities to reluctantly accepting a policy of segregated worship services and church buildings, which later led to the establishment of separate [Black] Conferences.

Numerous actions led to the establishment of [Black] Regional Conferences. In 1890, Charles M. Kinney approached the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist SDA about the formation of Black Regional Conferences and the concept was rejected. In 1909, a number of Black ministers requested that the General Conference officers

study the feasibility of establishing [Black] Regional Conferences, but subsequently that request was rejected due to the lack of representation of Blacks in favor of a Negro Department to handle the evangelistic outreach among African Americans. From 1927 to 1944 the Negro Department whose name later changed to Colored Department labored with expanded representation but possessed no policy making voice in the SDA Church concerning the work among Blacks. Between 1907 and 1929 unfortunate schisms occurred where leading Black ministers Lewis C. Sheafe, John W. Mann, and James K. Humphrey left the church because of the SDA Church racial policies. In 1929, a special committee appointed by the General Conference of SDA comprised of eleven Whites and five Blacks after studying the Black leaders' proposal rejected the idea of [Black] Regional Conferences.

Due to the overall circumstances in the United States, the Great Depression and World War II, no action on the formation of [Black] Regional Conferences occurred between 1930 and 1943. The Lucy Byard incident prompted a significant change in this situation.¹ Additionally, G.E. Peters played a key role along with the Committee for the Advancement of a World-Wide Work among Colored Seventh-day Adventist of at the 1944 Spring Council pre-meeting in advancing the cause for the organizing of [Black] Regional Conferences at the Spring Council. Ultimately, at the 1944 Spring Council General Conference under the leadership of President J. L. McElhaney, the General Council voted to recommend the establishment of [Black] Regional Conferences.

¹ Louis B. Reynolds, *We have Tomorrow: The Story of American Seventh-day Adventist with an African Heritage* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1984), 293-294.

In order to sketch the commencement of [Black] Regional Conferences in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, it is essential to understand that Blacks were an integral part of Adventism from its origin and in the onrush of the evangelical revivalism movement that swept the United States from the late 1790s to the mid 1840s.² This revivalism among Americans in both the East and West is collectively referred to as the Second Great Awakening. Small but significant, the Black influence provided a demarcation point for tracking the development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's position on church organization and its policies regarding race. The rise of evangelicalism and its many forms was connected and critical to the social and ideological changes that accompanied the market revolution which took place in American society after 1815. By the 1830s the market revolution and the Second Great Awakening had produced popular movements for change in the North. Reforms such as the drive for temperance reform, labor rights, debtor relief, humane treatment of the insane, improved health, land reform, public education, suffrage expansion, and, most importantly, abolition of slavery were the reforms advocated in this era. Although this period is noted for reform, the Millerite revivalists were not of the class seeking to make the world better by human effort.³ The reason the Millerite revivalists were not concerned with any improvement in society before the return of Christ, was that they believed a new social order would be instituted at the Second Coming of Christ.

² Richard Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism: Popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America, 1790-1865* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1978), 52.

³ Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-Over District* (New York: Harper Row, 1965), 291.

In his description of this period, Sydney Ahlstrom makes a statement which is uniquely relevant to Adventists: “Farmers became theologians, off beat village youth became bishops, odd girls became prophets.”⁴ The farmer becoming a theologian and the odd girl becoming a prophet are particularly applicable to Adventists. Ahlstrom quotes A. Leland Jamison, who identified four points as dominant during this period of evangelical revivalism:

1. Perfectionism, the doctrine that “perfect sanctification” or complete holiness and the “second blessing” were attainable or even necessary to the salvation of the converted Christian.
2. Millennialism, a doctrine of “lasting things,” often based on precise and extremely individualistic interpretation of the apocalyptic books of the Bible, urging Christians to ready themselves and the world for the imminent coming of the kingdom at Christ’s second advent.
3. Universalism, the doctrine, diversely stated that in Christ’s sacrifice the ultimate salvation of all mankind had been accomplished or revealed.
4. Illuminism, the claim that “new light” or further revelation of God’s purpose and nature had been given to man in these later times and that such new teachings, whether simply modifications of received doctrine or revolutionary conceptions of religion, should be heeded.⁵

The second and fourth designations are most suitable to Adventism. In his historical analysis of this period of revivalism, Ahlstrom places Adventism in the correct context as a not unusual development, but rather as part of the evangelical revivalism that swept the United States.⁶ Of the various themes that are emphasized during the Second Great Awakening, Millennialism was the most dominant. William Miller epitomizes this belief. Miller is described in the *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* as an American

⁴ Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 2 vols. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., Image Books, 1972), 1:575.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, 1:579-580.

farmer and Baptist preacher, who lived from 1782 to 1849 and announced the imminent coming of Christ, and founded the movement popularly known as Millerism.⁷ So the farmer, William Miller, does after all, become a theologian.

In the fall of 1840 Millerism (the Millerite movement) was slowly emerging as a well defined movement; it did so in the context of a national presidential campaign. Martin Van Buren was running for re-election as president and opposing him on the newly formed Whig party ticket was war hero William Henry Harrison with running mate John Tyler. In a revival-like manner, Whig supporters were shouting “Tippecanoe and Tyler, too” on their way to the polls in 1840. Political campaigns at the time were like religious revivals, supporting great causes such as temperance reform and the education of the masses. In this period there was the emergence of a new form of anti-slavery among northern Blacks and White abolitionists, which were dedicated to “immediate” abolition that called for uncompensated general emancipation.⁸

The “farmer” William Miller was easily the Billy Graham of his day, at least in terms of popularity. From 1834 when he began preaching full-time until 1844, he had a following of 100,000 who believed in his prophetic prediction of the imminent return of Christ. After the “Great Disappointment” on October 22, 1844, when Christ did not appear, the Millerite Movement fragmented.⁹ Although the Millerites undoubtedly were

⁷“William Miller,” *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 2 vols. (Commentary Referenced Series, Vols. 10-11, revised edition, Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1996), 11:73.

⁸ William J. Rorabaugh, Donald T. Critchlow, and Paula Baker, eds., *America’s Promise: A Concise History of the United States*, 2 vols. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2004), 1:179, 186, 211, 225; Darlene Clarke Hine, William C. Hine, Stanley Harrold, *The African-American’s Odyssey: Combined Edition*, 2nd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003), 185.

⁹ Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 1:580-581.

the ancestors of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, it is important to indicate that there were three separate groups that existed at that time. It was one of these smaller groups that maintained the reliability of the 1844 date and reinterpreted its meaning. This group was the forerunner of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.¹⁰

It was during the period of the Millerite Movement that a phenomenon appealing to Blacks occurred. The Millerite message predicted the apocalyptic return of Jesus Christ to this earth and with Him all the hopes and aspirations of disadvantaged Blacks would be fulfilled very soon. This appeal indicated that people should not seek any answers to their troubles or any betterment in the social order before the return of Christ, when a new social order would be established.

Between 1833 and 1844 Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians had all experienced divisions over the matter of slavery. From the previous short description of the inception of Seventh-day Adventism, one may understand the reasons why Adventists did not face the same dilemma then but finally met it a hundred years later. First and foremost, there was no official organization known as the Seventh-day Adventist Church at this point. The second reason is connected to the first. It is important to know that most of the Adventist leaders were strong abolitionists and they would continue to follow that policy. Also, there was no southern contingent of the Advent group, so the matter of slavery did not arise within the Advent movement.¹¹

¹⁰ Cross, 296-303.

¹¹ Francis D. Nichol, *The Midnight Cry* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1944), 188.

Organization and Organizational Structure of the SDA Church

On May 20-23, 1863, the organizational structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church emerged with the General Conference assembling in Battle Creek, Michigan. Twenty properly accredited delegates were present from New York, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota. Only Vermont's delegates were missing. The concise constitution voted for by the entire church organization included nine articles specifying the conditions to be adhered to: sessions to be held annually; the officers to be comprised of a president, a secretary, and a treasurer; the officers to be elected for a one-year period; and an executive committee consisting of three to be elected. The responsibilities of the committee and of the treasurer were explained with great clarity.¹²

In order to change the constitution, in the SDA Church, the requirement that a provision for amendments was made that only a two-thirds vote of the attending delegates was needed to alter the inherent law of the body. Eight articles were voted as comprising the constitution, and these articles were referred to as a model and were suggested to state conferences. The churches were to acquire ministerial assistance from the local conference entity. Amendments to a state constitution required adoption by two-thirds of the attending members "provided such amendments shall not conflict with the constitution of the General Conference." At the National Conference in 1863, there were thirty-five hundred members, twenty-two ordained ministers, eight licensed ministers, and one hundred and twenty-five churches.¹³ "A licensed minister is

¹²John Byington, "Report of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists," *Review and Herald* (May 26, 1863), 204-206.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 206.

authorized by the conference to perform substantially all the functions of the ordained minister for the members in the churches or companies to which he is assigned.

Ordination to ministry is the setting apart of the employee to a sacred calling, not for one local field alone but for the world church.”¹⁴ John Byington of New York was elected the first General Conference president after James White declined the position.¹⁵

It may be well at this juncture to provide an explanation of the organizational structure of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church. In the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* a description is provided of the church organization. Commencing on the local church level:

Representative - the form of church government which recognizes that authority in the church rests in the church membership with executive responsibility delegated to representative bodies and officers for the governing of the church. This form of church government recognizes also the equality of ordination of the entire ministry. The representative form of church government is that which prevails in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.¹⁶

Among SDAs there are five levels of organization structure from the local church (congregation) to the General Conference.

1. The church (congregation) - a united body of individual believers.
2. The local conference, or local mission - a united body of churches in a state, province, or local territory.
3. The union conference, or union mission - a united body of conferences or mission fields within a larger territory.

¹⁴ *Seventh-day Adventist Ministers Manual* (Silver Spring, MD: The Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1992), 71, 75.

¹⁵ Uriah Smith, “The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists,” *Review and Herald*, (March 26, 1863), 204.

¹⁶ *Church Manual*, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 16th edition (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000), 26.

4. The division - a section of the General Conference embracing local or union conferences or missions in large areas of the world field (the North American Division includes the United States and Canada); and

5. The General Conference - the general body embracing the church in all parts of the world.¹⁷

This study will illustrate how the [Black] Regional Conference segments are situated within the organization. It is significant to note that when the name “conference” is employed, it is referring to number two on the list above, that is, the “local conferences,” which are composed of a united body of churches in a state, province, or local territory. The union conference is usually referred to simply as the united body of conferences within a larger territory. Finally, this assertion from the *Church Manual* will be beneficial in this inquiry.

The General Conference in session, and the Executive Committee between sessions, is the highest organization in the administration of the church’s worldwide work, and is authorized by its constitution to create subordinate organizations to promote specific interests in various sections of the world; is therefore understood that all subordinate organizations and institutions throughout the world will recognize the General Conference as the highest authority, under God, among Seventh-day Adventists. When differences arise in or between organizations and institutions, appeal to the next higher organization is proper until it reaches the General Conference in session, or the Executive Committee at the Annual Council. During the interim between these sessions the Executive Committee shall constitute the body of final authority on all questions where a difference of viewpoint may develop. The committee’s decision may be reviewed as a session of the General Conference or at Annual Council of the Executive Committee.¹⁸

Whereas the General Conference in session, and the Executive Committee between sessions, is highest organization body in the SDA church, the General Conference is the highest power for all subordinate organizations and institutions throughout the world. In

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

the United Methodist Church, for example, the General Conference is the supreme legislative body. In the Seventh-day Adventist Church, on the other hand, the General Conference in session comprises the final word on all issues where a difference of viewpoint may occur. In the United Methodist Church, however, the General Conference possesses full legislative power in only fifteen areas in which the General Conference is granted authority to act.¹⁹

The General Conference in specific areas in the United Methodist Church is under subject to Restrictive Rules which limit the power of the General Conference to change basic doctrine, but in the SDA Church no such restriction on General Conference power exists. For example, in the United Methodist Church, the General Conference cannot act as a judicial body because these powers have been delegated to the Judicial Council which decides issues of law and constitutionality that comprised the various bodies within the church.²⁰

Black Millerite Preachers

Charles Bowles and John W. Lewis

A small number of Black preachers affiliated with Millerism made the case that a new day was coming for Blacks, which, due to the return of Christ, would see a new social order established. Indeed, one of the great Millerite preachers was an African-American, Charles Bowles, a former free-will Baptist minister in Vermont. “Father Bowles,” as he was affectionately called due to his age when he joined Miller, was born

¹⁹ *Church Manual*, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, 27; Jack M. Tuell, *The Organization of the United Methodist Church*, revised edition (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1982), 30.

²⁰ Jack M. Tuell, *The Organization of the United Methodist Church*, 27, 155.

of unique parentage. His father was an African servant, and his mother was the daughter of Revolutionary War White veteran Colonel Morgan. After he accepted the Advent message, he established many churches. Bowles died in 1843, just before the “Great Disappointment.” John W. Lewis, another Black, also proclaimed the Millerite message of the imminent return of Jesus and he also established a number of churches. Following the “Great Disappointment,” however, only a few Blacks joined the new church group.²¹

William Ellis Foy

The final important Millerite preacher of African-American heritage was William Ellis Foy. Described as a tall, light-skinned man, Foy received two visions in 1842 concerning the eagerly awaited coming of Christ and last day events, as he was preparing to receive holy orders as an Episcopal minister. A pamphlet was published in 1845 in Portland, Maine, relating Foy’s first two visions, along with a brief sketch of his Christian experience.²² Initially, Foy was reluctant to convey his vision due in part to the prejudice of the Millerites against anyone who claimed to possess special inspiration, as well as because of “the prejudice among the people against those of my color.” Foy wondered, “Why should these things be given to me, to bear to the world?” For, when called upon on February 6, 1842, by the pastor of the Bloomfield Street church in Boston to tell of his visions, Foy hesitatingly agreed to do so the next afternoon and he did so

²¹ LeRoy Froom, *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, 4 vols. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1945), 1:705.

²² “William Ellis Foy,” *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 10:563-564.

before a large congregation. Following this experience, Foy traveled for three months relating his vision to many denominations in packed churches.²³

Subsequently, due to the financial needs of Foy's family, he withdrew for a time from public view to work with his hands to support his family. After three months, Foy was compelled to resume his public ministry and relate his visions. At one such gathering Ellen Harmon (who later became White) remembers hearing Foy speak at Beethoven Hall in her hometown, Portland, Maine. In a 1912 interview, Ellen Harmon White indicated she had once had a conversation with Foy in a meeting in which she was telling her own early visions, and he stated that her visions were exactly what he had seen.²⁴ She evidently considered Foy's experience to be authentic.²⁵ In an article in the *Adventist Review*, Dr. Delbert W. Baker suggests that William Foy functioned as a prophet for God to the Advent movement in the pre-disappointment period.²⁶

Ellen Harmon White and Her Position on Issues Impacting the Black SDA Work

Perhaps there is one element to which could be ascribed the survival of that small group of Adventists which were the ancestors of the Seventh-day Adventists; it was the appearance of Ellen G. Harmon White. Sydney Ahlstrom, in referring to the chaos and shattered expectations of the Adventists following the Great Disappointment, portrays the

²³ *Ibid.*, 10:564.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 10:564.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 10:564.

²⁶ Delbert W. Baker, "William Foy: Messenger to the Advent Believers," *Adventist Review*, (January 14, 1988), 8.

part that Ellen Harmon White played in this way: “Yet out of this chaos emerged an agent of reorganization in the person of a slight teen-aged girl of Portland, Maine, the Adventist prophetess Ellen G. Harmon White (1827-1915).”²⁷

It was because of the involvement of Ellen G. Harmon White, who later married James White in 1846, one of the Advent preachers, that the Adventists were permeated with an illuminist outburst. The importance of the young Ellen Harmon White who had an extremely distressful childhood because of illness, and yet who found hope in Christ’s return as proclaimed by William Miller, cannot be overstated. Ellen Harmon White became a convert from the Methodist Church to the Advent Movement in 1842, and following the Great Disappointment of 1844, she started to have visions concerning the advancement of the Advent Movement. In December, 1844, she had her first vision in which was revealed that in the disappointing experience which they had gone through, the Adventists had been correct in their chronology the Lord was calling out to a people to preach to the world His early return.²⁸ Ellen Harmon White, the odd (unique or peculiar) girl, became a prophetess. Thus, in the early years Ellen Harmon White served as a gyroscope and cohesive element among the Adventist adherents.

It is somewhat ironic that the then obscure Ellen Harmon White’s first vision occurred in December, 1844 and followed the narrowly won victory in November that placed James K. Polk in the White House. Polk commenced his administration with

²⁷ Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 1:581.

²⁸“Ellen Gould Harmon White,” *SDA Encyclopedia*, 11:873-874. Adventists hold the belief that God furnished special direction in the rise and development of the SDA Church through the ministry of Mrs. Ellen G. White (1827-1915). Mrs. White is viewed by SDA members as being a genuine prophetess in accordance with the biblical heritage. Mrs. White’s writings are regarded as second in authority only to the Scriptures.

Texas becoming a state. In 1846, Polk made peace with Britain over Oregon, and settled the United States borders with Canada, went to war with Mexico concerning Texas' annexation, and concluded the Mexican War in 1848 by obtaining California and the New Mexico Territory. Meanwhile, David Wilmot's Proviso banned slavery in any territory acquired from Mexico as a result of the war and reinserted the slavery issue into national politics. The failure in 1847 of the Wilmot Proviso to pass the Senate, however, meant that in 1846 the South had obviously reversed its sentiment regarding the expansion of slavery. On July 8, 1850, Millard Fillmore became president upon the sudden death of Zachary Taylor, and Fillmore wholeheartedly supported the Compromise of 1850 and a new Fugitive Slave Law that was more repressive than the 1793 version.²⁹

Under the new Fugitive Slave Law, the fugitive needed only to be identified on the affidavit of the slave catcher; he or she could offer no defense and was permitted no trial. Federal agents were to be held responsible for the escape of the fugitives. The fine was \$1,000 for anyone interfering with the recapture of the runaway. Onlookers could be compelled to lend a hand if the slave attempted to escape. Aiding and abetting a runaway slave was punishable by a \$1,000 fine or a six-month imprisonment.³⁰

The Fugitive Slave Law resulted in a great response by antislavery supporters. The nation was extremely split along party lines. In various counties all over Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois, resolutions were adopted that stated that

²⁹ Rorabaugh, Critchlow, and Baker, *America's Promise*, 1:244-245, 248, 251.

³⁰ Henrietta Buckmaster, *Flight to Freedom: The Story of the Underground Railroad* (New York: Thomas Y. Cromwell Co., 1958), 103-104. The \$1,000 fine was worth a great deal more in the mid-19th century than it is today.

“disobedience to this enactment is obedience to God.” On the other hand, there were those who believed that supporting the law was, in fact, supporting the Union.³¹

It was in this setting that Ellen White offered the subsequent advice to the Adventist believers:

When the laws of men conflict with the word and law of God, we are to obey the latter, whatever the consequence may be. The law of our land requiring us to deliver a slave to his master, we are not to obey; and we must abide the consequences of violating this law. The slave is not the property of any man. God is his rightful master, and man has no right to take God’s workmanship into his hands, and claim him as his own.³²

On this matter that had caused such a dispute in the nation, Ellen White was clear in her disapproval of slavery and the laws that supported it. But even more meaningfully, she insisted that a Christian’s behavior comport with one’s moral principles. Despite the fact that it would be necessary to break the law, Christians must maintain their moral convictions. Thus, Ellen White’s advice placed slavery in the setting of being a distinctly moral matter.

Ellen White’s counsel must be viewed within the context of the tumultuous period of 1852 to 1861 for the United States. Despite the Democrats’ landslide victory in 1852 because of the Compromise of 1850, northern attention to the slavery issue continued to be high, as indicated by the 1853 sales of over a million copies of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. It could be seen in Illinois Senator Stephen A. Douglas’ support in Congress for the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 and the idea of

³¹ *Ibid.*, 105.

³² Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9 vols. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), 1:201-202. The reader should understand that Ellen G. White’s nine-volume work entitled *Testimonies for the Church* is considered the primary source of divinely inspired counsels to SDAs.

“popular sovereignty,” (a territory status decided by the majority vote either for slavery or against slavery existing in a territory). The act resulted in an enormous dispute that divided the existing political parties and caused the creation of two new parties, the free-soil Republicans and the nativist Know-Nothings. More than two hundred people died in the mounting violence and the Kansas territory (as a result of competition between the pro-slavery and antislavery forces in the Kansas territorial election in 1854 and 1855. Therefore, by 1856 Kansas had two territorial governments), it was in effect, plunged into a civil war; this became the basis for the press branding it as “Bleeding Kansas.”³³

In 1857 the Dred Scott Supreme Court decision was rendered, in which Chief Justice Roger Taney, speaking for the majority, indicated that Black people “had no rights which the white man is bound to respect.” According to the Supreme Court decision, Black people were not accepted as citizens; therefore neither Scott nor any other Black person could sue in the federal court system. Congress had no power under the Compromise of 1850, or under the Kansas-Nebraska Act, to abolish or prevent slavery in any of its territories, since such an act would violate the Constitution’s protection of property rights under due process of law. In 1858 the Illinois Republican nominee for the U.S. Senate, Abraham Lincoln, stated, “A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe that this nation cannot exist permanently half slave and half free.” Pouring fuel on smothering timbers of indignation on both sides was the 1859 raid by John Brown and eighteen others on Harpers Ferry, Virginia. Brown and his followers’ goals were to seize

³³ Hine, Hine, and Harrold, *The African American Odyssey*, 218-219; Rorabaugh, Critchlow, and Baker, *America’s Promise*, 1:256-257, 261.

the federal arsenal, to arm the slaves, and to end slavery forever. They did not succeed and were captured and hung.³⁴

Against the backdrop of a nation terribly divided over the slavery issue, in November, 1860, Abraham Lincoln was elected president. President Lincoln was a self-made man with less than a year's formal education. He was not a member of any church but was knowledgeable about the Bible and Shakespeare. In December, 1860, Lincoln's election spurred South Carolina to fulfill its threat to abandon the Union, and by February, 1861, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas also seceded and established the Confederate States of America. The Confederacy elected former Mississippi senator and planter Jefferson Davis as president. On April 12, 1861, Confederate General Beauregard commenced firing on Fort Sumter and the next afternoon Major Robert Anderson surrendered. The Civil War had started. Coincidentally, the name Seventh-day Adventists was also adopted in 1861, and also the recommendation was voted that the churches in the state of Michigan organize into a conference.³⁵

Lincoln indicated that he would not start shooting but would send food supplies to the federal forces and that would be enough. The surrender of Fort Sumter, however, compelled Lincoln to act. On April 15, 1861, Lincoln announced that insurrection was taking place and requested that the states provide 75,000 volunteers for ninety days of

³⁴ Hine, Hine, and Harrold, *The African American Odyssey*, 220, 224-225; Rorabaugh, Critchlow, and Baker, *America's Promise*, 1:269.

³⁵ Rorabaugh, Critchlow, and Baker, *America's Promise*, 1:273-274, 278; James White, *Life Sketches of Elder James White, and His Wife, Mrs. Ellen White* (Battle Creek, MI: SDA Publishing Association, 1888), 108.

duty to squelch the rebellion. On April 17, referring to Lincoln's announcement as proof of the administration's antagonistic purposes, the Virginia State Convention voted to secede. In securing Virginia the Confederacy had expanded its borders considerably north, thus protecting the Deep South from imminent assault and resulting in much difficulty for the Union by endangering Washington, DC. In a display of gratitude, the Confederacy transferred its capital from Montgomery, Alabama, to Richmond, Virginia, which would now be at the heart of the war. Afterwards, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina followed Virginia into the Confederacy, but four border slave states-- Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri--stayed in the Union.³⁶

As the war commenced in 1861, most Americans, both northerners and southerners, looked for a quick victory. In this regard Ellen White stated in August of 1861:

I was shown that many do not realize the extent of the evil which has come upon us. They have flattered themselves that the national difficulties would soon be settled and confusion and war ended, but all will be convinced that there is more reality in the matter than was anticipated.³⁷

As often is the case most people in the North and South had miscalculated, thinking that hostilities would be over rather rapidly, nothing could be further from the truth.

Almost from the beginning of the Civil War, slaves commenced freeing themselves. Since the Compromise of 1850 abolitionists were outraged by the practice of returning runaway slaves to their Confederate slave owners. Returning escaped slaves was condemned by Mrs. White as morally repugnant when she wrote:

³⁶ Rorabaugh, Critchlow, and Baker, *America's Promise*, 1:278-280.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 1:280; White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 1:264.

Love of liberty leads the poor slaves to leave their masters and risk their lives to obtain liberty . . . Great men, professing to have human hearts, have seen the slaves almost naked and starving, and have abused them, and sent them back to the cruel masters and hopeless bondage, to suffer inhumane cruelty for daring to seek their liberty . . . The equal of this sin is not found in heathen lands.³⁸

The refusal of Lincoln to abolish slavery immediately, however, was considered by abolitionists, free Blacks, and some Republicans as deplorable.

In Lincoln's inaugural address on March 4, 1861, he indicated that he would not interfere with slavery in the states where it already existed. Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune*, in his "Prayer of Twenty Millions" editorial stated his disappointment that Lincoln had not immediately acted against slavery. Lincoln's reply to Greeley on August 22, 1861, provides a skillful statement of his objectives:

My paramount objective in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it; and if I can save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it . . . I have here stated my purpose according to my view of official duty, and intend no modification of my off-expressed personal wish that all men, everywhere, could be free.³⁹

As an issue of military strategy, Lincoln decided that the victory of the Union was connected to the matter of slavery. On July 21 and 22, 1862, Lincoln discussed abolishing slavery in a cabinet meeting. Secretary of State Seward, however, persuaded him that the time was not right to issue a proclamation because it might seem like an act of desperation; he should wait for a Union victory. Some two months following Lincoln's initial intentions and five days after Lee retreated at Antietam, on September

³⁸ Hine, Hine, and Harrold, *The African American Odyssey*, 234-235; White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1: 257-25.

³⁹ Hine, Hine, and Harrold, *The African American Odyssey*, 226, 234, 236-237.

22, 1862, Lincoln issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation that freed no slaves in the Union states, only those in the Confederacy. It also granted the Confederate states one hundred days to rejoin the Union.⁴⁰

On January 1, 1863, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. It stated that “As a fit and necessary measure for suppressing said rebellion . . . I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated states, and parts of states are and henceforth shall be free.”⁴¹ It is important to recognize that the Emancipation Proclamation had a negligible impact because it applied only to areas and states that had remained in rebellion. Yet the Emancipation Proclamation remains one of the most consequential acts in American history, because it provided Lincoln and the North the moral high ground and it precluded any European nations supporting the pro-slavery Confederacy.⁴²

A significant number of Americans, particularly those of religious persuasion, thought that the Civil War had happened to this country as retribution for the sin of slavery. The South’s retribution was for upholding slavery; the North’s for not adequately opposing slavery. Ellen White, as early as August 3, 1861, at Roosevelt, New York, wrote: “God is punishing this nation for the high crime of slavery. He has the

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 227.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Hine, Hine, and Harrold, *The African American Odyssey*, 227.

destiny of the nation in His hands. He will punish the South for the sin of slavery, and the North for so long suffering its overreaching and overbearing influence.”⁴³

The statements of Mrs. White were borne out in the results of the war. Of the approximate 1.9 million men who fought in the Union army and 900,000 in the Confederate army (more than 2.8 million men), 620,000 (more than twenty percent) died. What is even more amazing is that the total number of deaths was greater than those in all of the other American wars combined. Due to a smaller White population and an early military draft in the South, twenty-five percent of the White males of military age died during the war. In the North the figure was about one-sixth.⁴⁴

In addition, to the 620,000 lives already lost in the nation’s worst war carnage, on April 14, 1865, five days after Lee surrendered his army to Grant at Appomattox Courthouse, Abraham Lincoln was shot at the Ford Theater by actor and Confederate sympathizer John Wilkes Booth. Lincoln died the following day. In December, 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment was ratified abolishing slavery. The Radicals in Congress proposed the Fourteenth Amendment, granting the rights of citizenship to all persons born in the United States. The Ku Klux Klan was organized in 1866 in Pulaski, Tennessee, by ex-Confederate general, Nathan Forrest Bedford, to intimidate Blacks and use violence against them.⁴⁵

⁴³ White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 1:264.

⁴⁴ Rorabaugh, Critchlow, and Baker, *America’s Promise*, 2: 302, 307, 309.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 307, 309.

Congressional so called Radicals prevailed in the 1866 election over the weaker measures proposed by Johnson, such as accepting the Thirteenth Amendment, and imposed more severe Reconstruction policies of the Freedmen's Bureau and the Civil Rights Bill on the South in 1867 and 1868. A prerequisite of Congress was that new state governments guarantee African-Americans the franchise and ratify the Fourteenth Amendment. Despite the fact that Blacks were approximately eighty percent of the Republican vote in the South, they comprised less than twenty percent of the elected officials. The majority of African-Americans held offices in cities, counties, or in the state legislatures, with South Carolina's legislature as the only one with an African-American majority.⁴⁶ Between 1868 and 1877, conservative White southerners employed complex political strategies and economics, along with a heavy dose of violence and intimidation, to retake the reins of government. Redeemers of conservative White Democrats, by 1876, in one way or another, had retaken power in most southern states, except in South Carolina, Louisiana, and Florida.⁴⁷

It is against that backdrop that Ellen White expressed deep regret that, while the circumstances were ideal, a unique chance by the church and government to impact the freedman had been squandered at the time of emancipation:

Much might have been accomplished by the people of America if adequate efforts in behalf of the freedmen had been put forth by the government and by the Christian churches immediately after emancipation of the slaves. Money should have been used freely to care for and educate them at the time they were so greatly in need of them. But the government, after a little effort, left [Blacks] to struggle, unaided, with his burden of difficulties . . . and the Seventh-day

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 309-310, 312, 314.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 316-318.

Adventist Church has failed to act its part . . . Noble efforts have been put forth by some Seventh-day Adventists to do the work needed to be done for [Black] people. Had those who were engaged in this work received the co-operation of all their ministering brethren, the result of their work would now be altogether different from what it is.⁴⁸

The period of Reconstruction, might have, if properly handled by both the federal government and various church denominations have alleviated many problems that the freedmen would continue to confront, but the commitment was not there, unfortunately.

The contested election of 1876 between Rutherford B. Hayes and Samuel J. Tilden resulted in Tilden winning the popular vote, but the Electoral College margin was close and unclear. In fact, if South Carolina, Florida, and Louisiana went to Hayes, he would have won, 185 to 184. Democrats controlled the House, and Republicans controlled the Senate, with Congress adapting a compromise of a special commission to determine the election outcome. Republicans retained the presidency, and Democrats gained control of the three southern states, along with an agreement to remove the federal troops from the South. Reconstruction concluded with slavery's end, and with the right to vote and other rights Blacks had secured being abolished in the 1890s. The failure of Reconstruction resulted from the failure to supply the freedmen with land, with political rights, and with the military to uphold their gains.⁴⁹

Even before the Atlanta Compromise Address, Booker T. Washington, in a letter regarding the racial policy, assented to segregation in 1885, as well as 1895. In a letter to the *Montgomery Advertiser* in 1885 and in the Atlanta Address on September 18, 1895,

⁴⁸ White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9:205.

⁴⁹ Rorabaugh, Critchlow, and Baker, *America's Promise*, 2:318-320.

Washington indicated, “We can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress.” Initially, W. E. B. Dubois endorsed Washington’s view and wrote him on September 24, 1895, “My Dear Mr. Washington: Let me heartily congratulate you upon your phenomenal success at Atlanta - it was a word fitly spoken.” Dubois then wrote to the *New York Age* suggesting that the Atlanta Address might be the basis of a real settlement between Whites and Blacks in the South.⁵⁰

Also, during this period of the 1880s and 1890s, southern Democrats steadily disenfranchised Black voters and began an assault on a wide range of Black rights. The first segregation laws involving railroad coaches on passenger trains were passed by the Tennessee legislature in 1881 and the Florida legislature in 1887. In 1887, Black farmers formed and participated in the Colored Farmers Alliance and the Populist Party which gave them few, if any, real benefits. Furthermore, the largest numbers of people, 235, mostly Blacks, were lynched in the United States in 1892, more than any other year in U.S. history. In the same year, the Democrats prevailed in every election in the South. In 1896, the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision of the U.S. Supreme Court upheld legal segregation and ruled that racial segregation in public places did not interfere with the right to equal protection of the law. Southern states and cities passed hundreds of laws following the Plessy ruling establishing a formal system of racial segregation. The Fifteenth Amendment, that stated race could not be used to deprive a man of the right to

⁵⁰ *Booker T. Washington (BTW) Papers*, 14 volumes, ed. Louis Harlan (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1972), 2:271-273; Letter from W. E. B. Dubois to BTW, September 24, 1895, *BTW Papers*, 1975, 4:26; Louis Harlan, “Booker T. Washington in Biographical Perspective,” *American Historical Review*, LXXV (Oct. 1970), 1582, 1599.

vote, was circumvented in the southern states with poll taxes, literacy tests, and grandfather clauses.⁵¹

In light of the events previously mentioned, however, the SDA Church in 1890 was still mostly integrationist in its perspective. It was hard for SDAs to accept the concept of segregated worship services. Church Historian Arthur W. Spaulding indicated it was only at the encouragement of those leaders whose commitment to the Black work and those who had seen the problems related to integrated worship services, which were considered to be “socially unacceptable,” that the church hesitantly agreed to a policy of segregated worship services and facilities. It was acknowledged that this was a man-made policy required by the times and the places in which people worked.⁵² The practice of segregated worship services was also occurring in other denominations as well, during this period.⁵³

Ellen White and a Separate Work

What did Ellen White have to say in view of Blacks being systematically disenfranchised, lynched, and segregated in various areas of the United States, with violence swelling to a fever pitch? Early in 1891, Ellen White began to publish an appeal entitled “Our Duty to the Colored People” encouraging Adventists to greatly increase their endeavors in the South. She indicated that “sin rests upon us as a church because

⁵¹ Hine, Hine, and Harrold, *The African American Odyssey*, 310, 313-314, 316, 318, 331.

⁵² Arthur W. Spaulding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, 4 vols. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1961), 2:187, 188.

⁵³ Grant S. Shockley, ed., *Heritage and Hope; The African-American Presence in United Methodism* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 29.

we have not made greater effort for the salvation of souls among [Black] people.” Yet, her overwhelming concern was for the advancement of the work and for the protection of the lives of the Blacks in harm’s way.⁵⁴

She wrote from Australia in 1895:

In a council meeting held in 1895 at Armadale, a Suburb of Melbourne, Victoria, I spoke of these matters, in answer to the inquiries of my brethren, and urged the necessity of caution . . . I said plainly that the work done for [Black] people would have to be carried only along different lines different from those followed in some sections of the country in former years . . . In regard to white and [Black] worshipping in the same building, this cannot be followed as a general custom with profit to either party - especially in the South. The best thing will be to provide [Black] people who accept the truth with places of worship of their own, in which they can carry on their own services by themselves. That is particularly necessary in the South in order that the work for white people may be carried on without serious hindrance.⁵⁵

What at times appears to be a compromise, on the part of Ellen White when considering the tender of the times made good sense for all concerned.

Ronald Graybill, in his *E. G. White and Church Race Relations*, shows a relationship between the increase of racial antagonism and violence and the need for wisdom in handling the work in the South. Thus, the SDA Church’s decision in 1890 and Ellen G. White’s endorsement of it in 1895 appear to have been in the best interest of all concerned. At the same time Booker T. Washington was delivering his “Atlanta Exposition Speech,” Ellen White was penning words for volume 9 of *Testimonies for the Church* when she wrote: “Let the colored believers be provided with neat, tasteful houses of worship. Let them be shown that this is done not to exclude them from worshipping

⁵⁴ Ellen G. White, “Our Duty to Colored People,” (20 March 1891), MS 6, 1891 in Ellen G. White, *The Southern Work* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1966), 12-13.

⁵⁵ White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9:206.

with White people because they are Black, but in order that the progress of the truth may be advanced.”⁵⁶

Leaders in the Black Work in the South after Slavery

Initially, the message of Seventh-day Adventists began in the South primarily through the personal work of lay workers. The first workers were mostly volunteers; no church organization assisted these individuals. The General Conference of 1865, however, pointed out the exigency of the situation and encouraged volunteers to go forth. The first call from the South came from R. K. McCune and a few others of Edgefield Junction, Tennessee, which was eight miles north of Nashville. McCune and some others had received materials from the Tract Society of Battle Creek, Michigan. They adopted Adventist beliefs, and they made a request to the church headquarters at Battle Creek for a minister. Elder Elbert B. Lane was sent in March 1871. He became the first Seventh-day Adventist minister to enter the southern field. He conducted an evangelistic series in the railroad station, putting Whites in one room and Blacks in the other room to speak to each other between the two doors. When the meeting was concluded, a church was organized with approximately twelve Black believers as members.⁵⁷

During the same period Black converts were baptized in the South, the Ku Klux Klan was using violence and intimidation to keep Blacks down. In response to the terrorism occurring in the South, in 1871 Congress passed the Second Enforcement Act,

⁵⁶ Ronald D. Graybill, *E. G. White and Church Race Relations* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1970), 37; White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9:206-207.

⁵⁷ Louis H. Hansen, *From So Small a Dream* (Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1968), 205-206.

referred to as the Ku Klux Klan Act, which declared it a crime to interfere with a person's right to vote, to hold office, to serve on a jury, or to experience violence rather than the equal protection of the law. The Edgefield Junction, Tennessee, church became the first SDA church established in the South in 1871.⁵⁸

At this time, however, no significant advance had occurred involving the freedmen, nor was there any organized endeavor by the SDA Church to impact them. The soul-winning attempts were confined in large measure to reach out to Blacks participating in White assemblies, where and when acceptable, or in teaching them as an educational project. Over the years, especially in the South, a wide chasm developed between the Black and White races, so in order for the gospel to be productive in reaching Black people, a separate soul-winning thrust by Black evangelists or dedicated Whites would be required.⁵⁹

The Ku Klux Klan Act of 1871 did result in a decline in Klan violence for a period of time. White southerners strongly believed, however, that White supremacy must be brought back and Republican state governments overthrown. During this period, Radical Republicans in Congress had become dissatisfied with what was happening in the South and particularly with the overwhelming needs of the freedmen. The Panic of 1873 sent the economy into a severe slump; businesses and financial institutions went bankrupt, unemployment rose to unprecedented heights, prices plunged, and the economy became

⁵⁸ Arthur W. Spalding, *Lights and Shades in the Black Belt* (unpublished book manuscript, E. G. White Publications, Office Document File: 376.0, Washington, DC: 1924), 29; Spalding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, 2:181.

⁵⁹ Spalding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, 2:183; Hine, Hine, and Harrold, *The African American Odyssey*, 296-297.

the people's primary concern. The panic was largely responsible for an altered perspective on the freedmen and the North's involvement in southern issues.⁶⁰

While progressive legislation such as the Civil Rights Act was being passed in 1875 the SDA was taking important progressive steps of its own involving women. First, the Civil Rights Act was an attempt to safeguard Blacks from racial discrimination and was enacted in 1875 by Congress to honor the late Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, a Black's rights advocate. It was initially meant to end discrimination in public accommodations, such as schools, churches, cemeteries, hotels, and transportation making them accessible to all, irrespective of race. But in order to obtain passage, a ban on discrimination in churches, cemeteries, and schools was eliminated from the bill before its passage. There was no effort made to enforce the Civil Rights Act after its passage and the U.S. Supreme Court, in 1883, ruled that the act was unconstitutional. Prior to that, in 1875, the Tennessee-Kentucky SDA Conference was organized with a woman, Bettie Coombs, as the first woman executive secretary and treasurer of any conference in the SDA Church's history and Silas Osborne as president.⁶¹

Robert M. Kilgore

Elder Robert M. Kilgore of Iowa returned home in 1864 after being honorably discharged as a Union army captain, to discover his parents were observing the seventh-day Sabbath, and soon he united with them. In 1868, he joined with the evangelistic team

⁶⁰ Spalding, *Light and Shades in the Black Belt*, 29.

⁶¹ Hine, Hine, and Harrold, *The African American Odyssey*, 297; *Review and Herald*, (September 26, 1871), 118-119.

of G. I. Butler and M. G. Cornell as their tent master, at a meeting in the South.

Immediately following this meeting James White ordained him. Kilgore had some favorable results in the South, but he was afterwards called to serve in the eastern states for a while. In April 1877 Kilgore was sent by the General Conference to Texas. On May 18, 1877, shortly after arriving, the General Conference received a message of his safe arrival and the expressions of joy by the believers in Cleburne, Texas. Within a year of his arrival, in 1878, Kilgore became the first president of the Texas Conference.⁶²

From the onset, Kilgore was persistently confronted with the challenging issue of race in the South. This concern continuously appeared to be a point of contention, especially in the late 1870s. Mainly due to the favorable results in the southern vineyard because of his efforts and the force of his personality, it was Kilgore who determined the matter of race for the SDA Church denomination. Spalding provides an insight regarding the matter and the official church position on this concern. Spalding writes:

The matter was debated in the General Conference in the sessions from 1877 to 1885. Most speakers maintained that God is no respecter of persons; Christians should not allow social questions to affect their church polity. . . . Kilgore, though, brought up with the Northern conceptions of the race problem, took a statesman like view of the situation in its practical aspects; and at the [General] Conference of 1890, made a vigorous statement of the case. In view of the obloquy, which is being cast upon the Adventist cause in the South, he advocated the separation of white and [Black] churches. In the end, this view prevailed. From the very small, weak work among the [Black] people at that time, there has grown to the present great proportions a [Black] constituency of power and ability. The result, in part, of the policy then established.⁶³

The policy seemed to have made the best of a bad situation.

⁶² “Robert M. Kilgore,” *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 10:866.

⁶³ Spalding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, 2:187-188.

In a report to the *Review and Herald*, October 29, 1889, Kilgore indicated that the specific camp meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, in which Black licentiate Charles M. Kinney was ordained and set apart for the work of ministry among his own people, had not been as well attended as he expected. Kilgore suggested some possible reasons, but the primary cause was that some Black people had attended camp meeting. At a special ministers' meeting convened by Kilgore, his response is very curious, to say the least: "Another reason [for the poor attendance] offered was the race question (the mingling of the [Black] brethren and sisters with those on the grounds), the prejudices of the people keeping many away. On this question we will speak later. Whether this was so or not, we will not say."⁶⁴ Kilgore made the case and stressed that this was an issue for those outside the church more than for those who have become Seventh-day Adventists.

We are glad, however, to note this fact: that for those who have received the truth and the love of it, and know the power of the truth in their own hearts as it is in Christ Jesus, the prejudices that once existed are gone; and were it not for the feeling on the part of those from without, there would be no trouble on this question, even in the southern states.⁶⁵

This raises an issue--was there for certain a transparent demarcation between the mindset of those who had become members of the SDA Church and those outside the church? Kilgore's earlier statements recognize that an issue existed even among those that "know the power of the truth in their own hearts as it is in Christ Jesus." Because of what occurred at this meeting, to a great degree, Kilgore raised the matter at the General

⁶⁴ Robert M. Kilgore, *Review and Herald*, (October 29, 1889), 683.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

Conference session in 1890, and proposed what ultimately became the decision to create a policy of segregated churches.⁶⁶

Kilgore was responsible for several additional alterations of policy, which invigorated the work among Whites; however, the policy decision to create separate churches was the most significant one. The Blacks in the southern sections were agreeable to the policy. They recognized the uselessness of any attempts to integrate and were intimidated by what retaliation would be rendered if such a sequence were followed. They acknowledged that the policy was man-made and was dictated by that time period and the places in which people worked.⁶⁷

What had transformed the racial atmosphere between 1877 and 1890? First, the "Compromise of 1877" ended Reconstruction; Democrats agreed to a Hayes victory because Hayes promised southern Democrats that he would not back Republican governments in Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina, and he would withdraw all federal soldiers from the South. Both Tennessee, in 1881, and Florida, in 1887, enacted laws requiring segregated railroad coaches. Both Tennessee and Florida, in 1889, passed a poll tax, and Mississippi enacted a poll tax, literary test, and understanding clause to disenfranchise Black voters, with other states following in quick succession. In the 1880s and 1890s, although the word segregation was not used, schools, hospitals, asylums, and cemeteries were segregated, along with theaters, concert halls, and other facilities that

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

had been previously totally denied to Blacks. Political and mob violence and lynchings continued unchecked into the 1880s and 1890s.⁶⁸

Charles M. Kinney

Charles M. Kinney was the first Black SDA to be ordained. Kinney was born in 1855 in Richmond, Virginia. Following emancipation, he worked his way across the country to Reno, Nevada. While in Reno, Kinney attended an evangelistic meeting held by J. N. Loughborough. As a result, he became a Seventh-day Adventist and the first Black member of the Reno, Nevada, church. Kinney attended Healdsburg College (later Pacific Union College) from 1883 to 1885. Then he embarked as a literature evangelist (one who engages in the sale of religious books or magazines) work in Kansas. In 1889 he was sent by the General Conference as a minister to Louisville, Kentucky and was ordained that same year by Elder Robert M. Kilgore at a camp meeting in Nashville, Tennessee. It was at that camp meeting that Kinney addressed the concept of Black self-determination within the church structure.⁶⁹

The minutes of the district workers' meetings at the Nashville campground on October 2, 1889, recorded a discussion of race and Kinney's diplomacy and insightful evaluation of the matter.

C. M. Kinney: It is probable that my ideas may be a little different from what has been expressed by some. But, they are mere suggestions, and I would be extremely glad if there is no necessity to carry them out. In the first place, a separation of the [Black] people from the white people is a great sacrifice upon our part: we lost the blessing of learning the truth--I have reference especially to general meetings.

⁶⁸ Hine, Hine, and Harrold, *The African American Odyssey*, 301-302, 314-316.

⁶⁹ "Charles M. Kinney," *SDA Encyclopedia*, 10:871.

Robert Kilgore: “What kind of separation do you refer to?”

C. M. Kinney: I refer to the separation in the general meeting; that is, is for them to have a different camp meeting. It would be a great sacrifice upon the part of my people to miss the information that these general meetings would give them; and another thing, it seems to me that a separation in the general meetings would have a tendency to destroy the unity of the third angel’s message. Now, then, this question to me is one of great embarrassment and humiliation and not only to me, but to my people also.⁷⁰

Although there is not a written account of what happened prior to this exchange, it appears apparent from Kinney’s comments that a previous conversation concerning this matter had taken place with the possible recommendation that Blacks attending the camp meeting could perhaps be properly situated by a separate tent meeting or separated in a different manner. Kinney then provides a substitute choice including some specific conditions. Particularly, all actions would be in accordance with God’s will; that they would not adversely affect the church organization; that they would be in the best interest of the movement; and that whatever course would be pursued would recommend itself to the good sense of [Black] people, “that they not be driven from the truth by our position on this question.”⁷¹

Obviously, Kinney believed that the most suitable course would be to advance toward integration when he indicates that “I might state first that the third angel’s message has the power in it to eliminate or remove this race prejudice upon the part of

⁷⁰ *Minutes of the District Workers’ Meeting*, Nashville, Tennessee SDA Camp Ground, October 2, 1889; Seventh-day Adventists interpret Revelation 14:6-12 as referring to the proclaiming of the gospel in the last days by the church. The three angels refer to three consecutive messages proclaimed to the world by God’s people. Thus the church is often mentioned in this part as “the third angel’s message.”

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

those who get hold of the truth.” Elder Kilgore appeared to agree and suggested that he had seen manifestation “that is clearly demonstrated, at least to a great extent, as I learned on the campground here.”⁷²

Nevertheless, integration must not have been universal sentiment since both Kinney and Kilgore chose the next best direction. Kinney provides twelve proposals which he believed would solve the matter. What is meaningful is that there be first, Kinney stated, “a frank understanding between the two races on all questions affecting each.” Kinney appeared to be aware of the improbability of the first proposal being fulfilled, so he stated that “where two races cannot meet together without distinction in the church, it is better to separate.” What is significant is to be aware of the fact that Kinney is handling two unique conditions--first, worship and dedicated Seventh-day Adventists and, second, soul-winning that the church is engaged in with those who are not Adventists but nevertheless possess the bias of that sector. Kinney stated that “I realize that difficulty of White laborers attempting to labor for both classes in the South, for if they labor for the [Black] people they will lose their influence among White people; but in laboring among the [Black] people exclusively that difficulty is obviated.”⁷³

Kinney’s stance on evangelistic meetings was that Blacks be advised to refrain from attending the same meeting as Whites, however, he felt that they not “be positively forbidden.” Also, Kinney would oppose and dissuade Black ministers against desiring to preach to White congregations. During this period, because evangelistic efforts were

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

connected with camp meetings, a two-fold course of action had to be pursued.

Accordingly, Kinney suggested a divergent course in regard to Adventist meetings. He says, “I would say in this connection that in my judgment a separate meeting for the [Black] people be held in connection with the general meetings, or a clear-cut distinction, by having them occupy the back seats, etc., would not meet with as much favor from my people as a total separation.” Possibly with prescience of the unavoidable, Kinney offers two further suggestions: “Until there is enough to form a conference of [Black] people, let the [Black] churches, companies or individuals pay their tithes and other contributions to the regular state officers . . . that when [Black] conferences are formed, they bear the same relation to the General Conference that white conferences do.” In spite of everything, however, Kinney remains upbeat in his assessment of the matter. Additionally, he suggested “that Christian feelings between the races be zealously inculcated everywhere so that the cause of separation may not be because of the existence of prejudice within, but because of those on the outside whom you hope to reach.”⁷⁴

Several pertinent principles are conspicuous when we take into account Kinney’s suggestions. First, obviously the suggestions Kinney made were to the southern delegates and ministers of Tennessee and Kentucky, but if it were the case that the joining of the Seventh-day Adventist Church required the removal of all racial prejudices, that would make Kinney’s pronouncements pointless. Kinney was compelled to indicate that he believed that the Adventist message could uproot all bias. Where this uprooting of prejudice appeared unlikely, Kinney suggested a substitute direction that would finally result in the establishment of [Black] Regional Conferences. Kinney foresaw that result

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

fifty-five years before [Black] Regional Conferences would come to fruition. The second recommendation Kinney made was that in the event of or when Black conferences were established, they should have the same relation to the General Conference as the White conferences. At this point in the church's organization there was not a medium level between the local state conference and the General Conference. Union conferences were formed in 1901. The final recommendation that Kinney made involves an understanding of a requisite for a continual adaptation on the matter of race for White workers. He recommended that "Christian feelings between the two races be zealously inculcated everywhere." Kinney was aware of the significance of removing racism from within although it existed in the overall cultural milieu.⁷⁵

James Edson White

Of White Adventists who labored for Black members, James Edson White is without an equal. He was not the only one who suffered tremendous losses and deprivation; others did also. It was White, however, who seized the heavenly vision and grabbed hold and would not let it go despite hardly any support and while confronting seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Ellen G. White and James White were the parents of four sons. Their eldest son, Henry Nichols, died in 1863 at the age of sixteen from pneumonia. The fourth son, John Herbert, was born in 1860 and died three months later of erysipelas. The husband and father, James White, contracted a malignant type of malaria on August 1, 1881, and died on August 6, 1881, at the age of sixty. Ellen G. White had two surviving sons in the early 1890s, James Edson and William Clarence.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

These sons were quite different in personality. William reflected the traits of his mother, reliable and cautious; Edson, like his father, was resourceful and energetic with considerable administrative ability.⁷⁶

In 1893 James Edson White was involved in a business enterprise in Chicago, and yet spiritually he was at low ebb. Mrs. White, his mother, spent nine years in Australia (1891-1900). She went there to strengthen the work in Australia and New Zealand. Under her tutelage, institutions of education, publishing, and health care and food were developed with a tremendous increase in the membership from several hundred to about ten thousand members. During this period she frequently wrote Edson letters from Australia that addressed his spiritual condition. He earnestly sought to know God's will and Edson believed that the Lord answered his petition with a fresh revelation of His grace. Edson decided that he must begin, again, laboring for Christ.⁷⁷

He wrote his mother in Australia telling her of his plan to re-enter the work. Around this same time, Edson heard Professor C. C. Lewis speak about the needs of the Black work in the South. While in Battle Creek, Michigan on business, Edson met with an old friend, Will O. Palmer, who had recently been converted. Palmer convinced Edson and his wife Emma to enroll in the Bible training classes to prepare themselves for ministry.⁷⁸ Also, at the same time, he made inquiry about his mother's 1891 tract

⁷⁶ Arthur W. Spalding, *Captains of the Host: A History of Seventh-day Adventists 1845-1900*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1949), 1:249, 312, 528-529, 636.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 608-609, 636.

⁷⁸ Ronald D. Graybill, *Mission to Black America: The True Story of Edson White and the Riverboat Morning Star* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1971), 14-15.

concerning the need to work among Blacks in the South, which she presented as a stirring appeal to the General Conference leaders in 1891.⁷⁹

It was at the Bible Institute that Edson came in contact with Dr. J. E. Caldwell, who had been laboring for Black people in Knoxville, Tennessee, for a number of months. Dr. Caldwell found out about Edson's interest in working in the South. Dr. Caldwell shared with Edson an appeal his mother had conveyed to General Conference leaders in 1891 concerning the need for Seventh-day Adventists to labor for Blacks. Following his conversation with Dr. Caldwell, Edson commenced making inquiries about his mother's 1891 appeal, only to discover that the General Conference brethren he conversed with apparently knew nothing about it.⁸⁰

On another occasion, Edson was engaged in chit chat with a painter working at the *Review and Herald* facility. In the conversation, Edson spoke of his concern regarding Blacks in the South. The painter told Edson about a tract he read that he believed was written by Edson's mother, Ellen White, which the painter found on the floor in the upstairs room vacated by the International Tract Society. Heading upstairs, Edson located the room and found several copies of "Our Duty to the Colored People," an appeal she made to denominational leaders on March 21, 1891. When Edson read the tract, his mind was made up to work in the cause of God for Black people.⁸¹

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 16-18.

⁸¹ Spalding, *Captains of the Host*, 1:636-637.

Edson had been steamboating for two or three years along the upper Mississippi where he had become a pilot and captain on the “Father of Waters.” Then he decided to construct a riverboat on the small Kalamazoo River at Allegan, steer it down the river, over Lake Michigan, through both the Chicago Canal and the Illinois River over to the Mississippi in order to head down the Mississippi to the deep South. Edson executed his plan successfully. Edson hoped to utilize this vessel for lodging for the workers, a chapel for new converts to the message, a printing facility, and other business enterprises. He called this boat *The Morning Star*. The vessel traveled down the Mississippi and docked off Vicksburg, Mississippi. This missionary endeavor was underwritten through a simple little book entitled *The Gospel Primer* that Edson had written.⁸²

The book was utilized at first as a device to educate illiterate Blacks to read and the secondary intent was to place the books in the hands of literature evangelists to sell for twenty-five cents, with half of the proceeds staying with the literature evangelists and the other half going to the mission. These primers were sold by the millions. A second book written by Edson, called *The Coming King*, for many years led all subscription books concerning the Second Advent. The mission of working for Blacks was privately started and underwritten; the denomination provided no monetary assistance. Due to Mrs. White’s favorable messages, however, volunteers were recruited to work for Blacks in the South.⁸³

⁸² *Ibid.*, 637-638.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 636-638, 640.

Edson also embarked on garnering support through the publication of a monthly paper called *The Gospel Herald*. He adhered to the pattern of educating Blacks to labor for other Black people. In as rapid a manner as Black believers could be taught, they were made pastors and teachers. The goal was to furnish Black schools with Black teachers, but the urgent needs outpaced the availability of workers so that in a significant number of situations White teachers from the North were hired. Uncomfortable conditions were the outcome for the cause due to the prejudice they encountered. Despite these obstacles, the work developed so that ten years after the beginning endeavor was launched, there were almost fifty small schools in six states and the formation of higher schools for progressing students had been put in place.⁸⁴

In 1898 Edson published a little book comprised of his mother's beginning appeals that had caused him to enter the work. He gathered together her articles published in the *Review* in 1895-1896, along with the initial 1891 appeal, pointing out to the church its duty to Black people in the South. This little book, entitled *The Southern Work*, contained some of Mrs. White's advice concerning how to handle outreach work involving Blacks. Afterwards, communications from Ellen White, not only on the subject of gospel work among Blacks, but also on race relations, were included.⁸⁵

The work Edson started on the *Morning Star* ultimately resulted in the creation of the Southern Missionary Society, which supervised schools, conducted evangelistic

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 640.

⁸⁵ Graybill, *Mission to Black America*, 113; Ellen G. White, *The Southern Work* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1966). This book was reissued in 1966 and is now available as a regular church publication.

efforts, educated the people about health principles, financed charities, and carried on the publishing work. Due in large measure to the methodology that James Edson White and his associates brought to the southern work, it resulted in the emergence of a nucleus of Black pastors and teachers whose work for Blacks in the South flourished. The Southern Missionary Society fostered the educational work which ultimately concluded in many of these individuals becoming prominent pastors and evangelists, such as Thomas Murphy, Frank Bryant, M. C. Strachan, and Franklin Warwick. Anna Knight of Mississippi became a prominent teacher and missionary to India.⁸⁶

In 1895, to further provide training for African American pastors and teachers to work for other Blacks, an estate was purchased in the north of Alabama, in close proximity to the city of Huntsville, to establish an agricultural and industrial as well as normal and theological school. This was the foundation of Oakwood University, now a four-year liberal arts and graduate university. In 1908, medical treatment facilities for Blacks were started in the city of Nashville, Tennessee, and culminated in the Riverside Sanitarium and Hospital.⁸⁷

The Major Actions Leading to the Establishment of [Black] Regional Conferences

The period of the 1890s witnessed consequential changes in the political landscape of America. Most of the Republican campaign promises of the previous fourteen years were enacted into law in 1889-1890. But by 1890 a political eruption took place when

⁸⁶ Graybill, *Mission to Black America*, 141.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 641, 643, 385.

western and southern farmers came together in the Farmers' Alliance and established a new political party, the Populist Party. This alliance resulted in 1892 in voters rejecting Republicans in many places for either the Populist Party or the Democrats. In 1893, a major depression began in the U.S. and organized labor experienced two emotional losses in the form of strikes at the Homestead Steel Plant in 1892 and the Pullman Railroad strike in 1894. President Cleveland was unable to successfully confront the obstacles of the depression; therefore his party, the Democrats, suffered major defeats in the 1894 Congressional election. In addition, restrictions on Black voting had been enacted by Florida, Tennessee, and Mississippi by 1890; the other southern states adopted complicated restrictions on Black voting between 1890 and 1908. These involved one or more impediments, such as the poll tax, the literacy test, the understanding clause, and the grandfather clause. The 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision stated that segregation was constitutional as long as both races were provided equal facilities. After the Plessy decision of 1896, southern states and cities enacted hundreds of laws that established a detailed system of racial segregation.⁸⁸

Progressivism, as an extraordinary occurrence of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, applied fresh notions concerning government and was characterized by political reforms involving cities, states, and the federal government. The reform period was marked by organized interest groups exerting the progressive place in the political process. The Progressive Era changed the federal government from a passive to an important activist role in the economy, which included regulating economic activities and

⁸⁸ Berkin, et al, *Making America: A History of the United States*, 3rd ed. (New York: Houghton Miffland Co., 2003), 635; Hine, Hine, and Harrold, *The African American Odyssey*, 315, 318.

enacting laws to protect consumers and some workers. Progressivism was a period of struggle for Blacks in race relations, with segregation and disenfranchisement being fought by Blacks with the establishment of the NAACP in 1909. Some Whites, however, reacted during this period to prevent Blacks from exercising their rights by violent race riots and lynchings. This new reform mood swept over America involving the revival of the women's movement, the reactions to increased immigration with strengthened laws, and public health and housing and sanitation, as well as the founding of settlement houses, and also with the reform of local, state, and national governments. The new viewpoint extended to race with exclusiveness and discrimination under the guise of reform.⁸⁹

In the Progressive Era, the first generation of African-Americans born following the end of slavery obtained adulthood. During the period, racial matters were clearly less important to most Whites on the national stage than other reform determinants. Although they confronted disheartening obstacles, Blacks constructed institutions devoted to their advancement. Prior to the Hepburn Act, the Elkin Act, the Pure Food and Drug Act, the Meat Inspection Act, the Federal Reserve Act, the Federal Trade Commission Acts, the Sixteenth Amendment, the Seventeenth Amendments, the federal government's activity involved primarily distributing land grants and the placing of protective tariffs. Following the Progressive Era, the American government would play an important and

⁸⁹ Berkin et al, *Making America*, 671, 673; Hine, Hine, and Harrold, *The African American Odyssey*, 372-373, 395.

more modern role in the economy, regulating a broad spectrum of business behavior and acting to guard a select group of laborers and consumers.⁹⁰

In the Progressive Era, thousands of Black southerners migrated to the North and African-Americans performed their duties well in World War I, but the majority of Whites became frightened at the infusion of Black migrants as labor competitors. Between 1900 and World War I, lynching of Blacks resulted in more than eleven hundred deaths, most occurring in the South, but some also in the Midwest. During this same period White Americans initiated violence in the form of race riots in various cities as they endeavored to preclude African-Americans from undertaking a more equal position in America. In 1920, even with White hostility, Black Americans showed they would not acquiesce to the repudiation of their rights. Under Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson in the Progressive Era, Americans came to anticipate domestic plans originating from a strong White House. Reform was equated to house cleaning and was practiced throughout American society; for once, women received the right to participate in the political process by voting.⁹¹

In 1901, the Progressive Movement outside the church was characterized by a reform movement in the SDA Church which resulted in a major reorganization of the church. At this point in the church's organization there was not a medium level between the local conferences and the General Conference. Union Conferences were only formed

⁹⁰Hine, Hine, and Harrold, *The African American Odyssey*, 425; Berkin, et al, *Making America*, 649, 655, 657, 667-668.

⁹¹ Hine, Hine, and Harrold, *The African American Odyssey*, 425; Berkin, et al, *Making America*, 672.

in 1901, whereas before this date none existed. Nevertheless, in spite of the official vote to create a policy of segregated churches, the petition for Black conferences was denied, with no formal mechanism instituted to reach the millions of African-Americans in North America.⁹² The denial of the petition for Black Conferences in 1900 showed the SDA Church was short-sighted in its perspectives concerning race and evangelizing Blacks in North America.

Negro Department--Lack of Black Representation

In 1894 there were about fifty Black Seventh-day Adventists in the whole United States. As a result of an increase in Black leadership, the Black work commenced to emerge with the powerful evangelistic preaching of such outstanding individuals as L. C. Sheafe, John Manns, Sidney Scott, J. K. Humphrey, J. H. Lawrence, G. E. Peters, P. C. Rogers, M. C. Strong, T. B. Buckner, J. M. Campbell, M. G. Nunez, B. W. Abney, W. H. Green, J. G. Dasent, and John Allison. It was obvious by 1909 that significant progress had been achieved in the Black work. By 1909, the Black SDA membership was 900. It became clear that some organizational adjustment needed to take place for the further progress of the work among Blacks. At the 1909 General Conference, the idea of establishing [Black] Regional Conferences was rejected for a proposal to establish a Negro Department. It was at the recommendation of Elder A. G. Daniells, president of the General Conference, that a North American Negro Department be established for the further development of the work (work refers to the effort to establish more Black

⁹² Spalding, *Origin and History of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 2:188; Walter Fordham, *Righteous Rebel* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1999), 67.

churches through evangelism into the SDA Church) for African-Americans.⁹³ Elder A.

G. Daniells, in his report to the General Conference session of 1909, made a preliminary statement regarding the proposed recommendation for the establishment of the North American Negro Department for the greater advancement of the work among the Black population of America. Daniell's stated the following:

Meetings have been held where consideration has been given to the question of how they and we could advance the work among their people more effectively and rapidly than we have been doing...We have studied it and the presidents and committees of the Southern Western, Southern, and Southeastern Conferences have given it careful consideration, and have recommended it...and the members of the General Conference Committee who have taken the matter under consideration have agreed to it, and now it is recommended in the Constitution...The department [the Negro Department] will have a [executive] secretary, and executive committee, area departmental committee, the same as the other departments...The committees will then meet and plan its work, and outline its policy for the future the same as do other departmental committees. Their work will be to carry forward the evangelical work among the colored people.⁹⁴

The establishment of the North American Negro Department in the area of evangelism showed that this was an excellent first step for African Americans in the SDA Church.

The Negro Department's first secretary was J. W. Christian, a White SDA like all the first administrators of the Negro Department were White. Christian, due to his health, was secretary of the Negro Department all of a month. With Christian's resignation, A. J. Haysmer became secretary and headed the department until the General Conference session in 1914. At that point, Haysmer reported a membership of 1,414 and tithe of \$16,323.02. No session was held in 1917 due to World War I. C. B. Stevenson was

⁹³ "The North American Negro Department," *General Conference Bulletin*, Thirty-Eighth Session, vol. 17, no. 5 (May 21, 1913): 77-79.

⁹⁴ *Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald*, vol. 86, no. 23 (June 10, 1909):13.

elected as secretary of the Negro Department, heading it until the General Conference in 1918. An appropriation of \$200,000 was voted toward the department for the period of nine years. Stevenson reported at the 1918 session an African-American membership of 3,500 and tithe and offerings of \$174,000.⁹⁵ He stated that there were 60 Black ministers, 75 school teachers, along with a number of nurses and colporteurs (same as canvassers or literature evangelists).⁹⁵ What is most telling regarding the growth in membership is that between 1909 and 1918 the Black membership had increased from 900 in 1909 to 3,500 in 1918 due to the formation of the North American Negro Department.

Schism Involving Leading Black Ministers Lewis C. Sheafe, John W. Mann, and James K. Humphrey

Lewis C. Sheafe

The prominent appearance of a Black minister, Lewis Sheafe, is presented in November, 1902, in the Washington, DC African-American newspaper, the *Colored American*. What is unique about the reference to Sheafe is as a Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) minister featured as the speaker in the pulpit of the Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Church. The paper provides the flattering depiction of Sheafe as the “noted apostle of Seventh-day Adventist.” Morgan indicates that Lewis C. Sheafe was the first outstanding “apostle” to the Black urban masses.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ “Report of the North American Negro Department,” *General Conference Bulletin*, Thirty-ninth session, vol. 8, no. 5 (April 15, 1918): 76; Fordham, 67.

⁹⁶ Doug Morgan, “Lewis Sheafe: Adventism’s Forgotten Apostle to Black America,” *Paper presented to the Association of Seventh-day Adventist Historians*, April 20, 2007, 1.

Lewis Charles Sheafe was born on November 16, 1859 to Joseph and Louise Sheafe in Baltimore, Maryland. His parents were former slaves who obtained their liberty prior to his birth. Eye damage and various health problems interfered with Sheafe acquiring adequate education, although his mother provided him with the basics of elementary education. During his youth, Sheafe commenced farming in West Dedham, Massachusetts, close to Boston. He had a conversion experience with Christ when fifteen, but he could not decide which denomination to join. Following a number of years of intense prayer and Bible study, however, he decided on the Baptists.⁹⁷

The devoted young farmer felt the urge to go and preach to his people, and in 1885 he formally accepted the call. He enrolled at Wayland Seminary, a Baptist educational facility in Washington, DC established to train freedmen for the ministry. He was twenty-six years of age. Sheafe achieved academic excellence, finishing the normal and theological classes at an accelerated rate. Besides the institution's president, Dr. George Mellen Prentiss King, who bestowed accolade, the only individual that Sheafe conveyed especial affection for was one of the faculty members, Miss Annie C. Howard, whom he married on June 6, 1888, shortly after graduation from Wayland. Lewis and Annie Sheafe both incorporated what DuBois referred to as the "Talented Tenth" to aid in the elevation of the Black working class.⁹⁸

Sheafe's first pastorate following the seminary was at Pilgrim Baptist Church in St. Paul, Minnesota, where he began November 4, 1888. He discovered a church with only 36 attending services in a sanctuary that held 500. During his tenure, the average

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

attendance increased to 300 and the building debt was retired. Sheafe was in the forefront under the Minnesota Civil Rights Committee to challenge racial segregation laws passed in the state of Tennessee; however, the legal challenge was unsuccessful. The Sheafe family moved in 1892 to a Youngstown, Ohio, pastorate. Under Sheafe's leadership, the membership increased from 55 to 300 and a new church was built in just two years. He and his family received an invitation to the pastorate at Urbana, Ohio, west of Columbus, Ohio. In 1894, the paper *The Salem Daily News* described Sheafe as "the eloquent colored divine." He shocked his membership by stating that he had adopted the doctrines of the Seventh-day Adventists and so relinquished his pulpit and Baptist faith. At the 1899 General Conference session, Sheafe declared that the most significant element was due to treatment he received at the Battle Creek Sanitarium and "what I ascertained regarding health foods and in principles that my eyes opened to present truth."⁹⁹

The General Conference issued Sheafe a ministerial license in March, 1897. The following five years Sheafe was involved in evangelistic endeavors, mainly in Kentucky, Tennessee, and South Carolina. At the time Sheafe commenced his efforts, the Adventist outreach to African-Americans was in its initial phase, the ministry of James Edson White remained at the beginning level. In 1901 racial strain entangling Sheafe arose regarding his newly appointed role in the recently established Southern Union. Sheafe was accused of rejecting segregation adjustment, creating a gulf between the races, with

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

his work on an undertaking for ministry at a Black college in South Carolina without compensation.¹⁰⁰

In October, 1901, A. G. Daniells had resolved the difficulty and had Sheafe reassigned to General Conference employment. The Washington, DC church, established in 1889, increased to a membership of about 150 by 1900. The mushrooming increase in membership was due to a sizeable Black population in Washington, where by 1900 two-thirds of the congregation was African-American.¹⁰¹

Daniells acknowledged the vital importance of the national seat in the move to this new location of the General Conference center of operations and control. He was committed to a significant outlay of General Conference funds to advancing and developing the church influence in the capitol, but the prerequisite was that the racial predicament be addressed in the discussion with leaders of the Southern Union Conference in Nashville in January 1902. In the discussion, Daniells conveyed in his correspondence to Atlantic Union president H. W. Cottrell, an arrangement had been achieved on a two-prong plan involving racial matters:

1. Adventists should not place their attentions and activities in attaining an equality between the races;
2. The [Black] and [White] races should be segregated specifically in those areas of the nation where it created problems for them to mix.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

Washington, Daniells was confident, possessed Southern proclivities, best dealt with by having segregated churches. Daniells' resolute position on race ran counter to the steadfast stance of dedicated leaders of the Washington church, who had an unwavering pledge to the cause of the equality of the races, demonstrated by all adherents joined together in one church. The two main proponents of this position were one Black, Dr. James Howard (a physician), and Andrew Kalstrom (for a number of years the congregation's first elder). They endeavored to push this position as basic to the Adventist movement's re-establishment of Bible-based Christianity in the future heavenly existence that was coming.¹⁰³

In 1902, the two camps anticipated an extensive General Conference resource-backed evangelistic endeavor, with agreement on a two-pronged consequential short-term strategy; two evangelists, one Black and one White, to obtain an audience with both the Black and White races. It was on what to do after the evangelistic meeting that was in dispute; Daniells expected the evangelistic outreach to conclude with two racially segregated churches. Howard and Kalstrom, however, desired that the new converts be combined into one church, which advocated the equality of the races as a tenet of their new-found faith.¹⁰⁴

Sheafe and Judson S. Washburn commenced their evangelistic meetings by pitching separate tents in June 1902. By September 1, 1902, the *Washington Post* carried a phenomenal article that indicated that Sheafe had attracted a group of 2,000 to hear him

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

preach a sermon on the marriage supper of the Lamb in a tent that had a seating capacity of 800. The two African-American capitol newspapers also accorded Sheafe significant and auspicious reports.¹⁰⁵

In mid-August, the quantity of new believers in the Adventist faith had reached twenty-eight, but would ultimately increase to sixty. The new believers at first became members of the Washington Adventist Church, which was a one church congregation. During September, however, a tortuous division occurred which was perpetuated by both the General Conference and Atlantic Union officers. The church was divided according to race primarily, with approximately 50 percent of the White members configured into a new church congregation pastored by Washburn, and the balance staying with the initial church congregation, led by Sheafe. The congregation, under the leadership of Sheafe, became known as the First Seventh-day Adventist Church of Washington. A third evangelistic meeting was conducted in 1903, with a highly favorable outcome. Sheafe, as a consequence of this evangelistic crusade, established a third Seventh-day Adventist church in Washington in December--the overwhelmingly Black People's Church. The overall membership of the People's SDA Church had become 130 by 1905.¹⁰⁶

The SDA's church's segregation policy was not the issue, but its omission in fulfilling the "separate but equal" doctrine the Supreme Court endorsed for the nation and which the SDA Church leadership chose to follow for the evangelistic meeting, was the real issue. The People's Church had secured a facility at 10th and V Streets, NW.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ George Knight, *Organizing to Beat the Devil* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2001), 146; Morgan, "Lewis Sheafe: Adventism's Forgotten Apostle to Black America," 6.

Sheafe's church secured a loan by itself, and actually that became important when viewed in connection with the just finished denomination crusade (a denominational drive for funding for a new church facility for the Second SDA Church) of \$10,000 for the Second Seventh-day Adventist Church, and the crusade for \$100,000 to erect a new church facility at the newly acquired General Conference headquarters, the Takoma Park office. The People's Church, in 1906, forwarded a request to the General Conference for fair use of the updated school and sanitarium in Takoma Park. If the requestees could not use the recently constructed facilities that they be allowed to utilize church funds to erect a training school and treatment center for Blacks in Washington, DC. The General Conference official viewed positively the likelihood of appropriating monies for that intention in the not too distant future, nevertheless denying the independent financial arrangement that the People's Church advanced, and declining to pledge General Conference monies in the near future.¹⁰⁷

In the fall of 1906, Sheafe's unhappiness with the unfairness of the situation caused him to approach friends, John Harvey Kellogg and Alonzo T. Jones, who were vigorous opponents of the GC reorganization plan and the leadership of A. G. Daniells. Sheafe visited Dr. Kellogg in Battle Creek to explore the possibility of young African-American Adventists being trained in medical missionary paths in Battle Creek rather than Washington. In a letter to his church, Sheafe indicated that the doctor was not the problem the General Conference made him out to be. To Sheafe, Jones' anti-hierarchical structural perspective was in harmony with Sheafe's Baptist background outlook on the

¹⁰⁷ Knight, *Organizing to Beat the Devil* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2001), 146; Morgan, "Lewis Sheafe: Adventism's Forgotten Apostle to Black America," 6-7.

authority of the local church congregation. So that in February 1907, the People's Church asserted its local church's autonomy from the General Conference apparatus, yet at the same time maintaining Adventist tenets and customs.¹⁰⁸

It was six years in the making for the quarrel to be settled and the besieged minister's home life was the stimulus for the settlement, as it had been an element causing the estrangement initially in the marital relations between Sheafe and his wife Annie. Those circumstances, also with concerns over Battle Creek and of "spiritual pride," were the primary issues of Ellen White's counsel to Sheafe in February 1907. Then great disaster hit. Just a few months following the People's Church severing ties from the General Conference in 1907, Sheafe's wife, Annie, and cherished and gifted eighteen-year-old daughter Clara contracted tuberculosis. Clara died in December 1907, then wife Annie in February 1908.¹⁰⁹

In 1911, in Madison County, Alabama, Sheafe was tied in holy matrimony to the former Lucy P. Whitsel. She boastfully proclaimed that she would persuade him to be reconnected to the SDA Church. As Mrs. Sheafe predicted, near the beginning of 1912, Sheafe held out a peace offering to the General Conference by extending an invitation to religious liberty director (an individual elected to protect the religious freedoms from government interference of SDA members and to guard against religious rights being undermined on the job, school; on the local conference level, union conference level,

¹⁰⁸ Knight, *Organizing to Beat the Devil* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2001), 146; George Knight, *From 1888 to Apostasy: The Case of A.T. Jones* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1987), 242.

¹⁰⁹ Morgan, "Lewis Sheafe: *Adventism's Forgotten Apostle to Black America*," 6-7.

division or General Conference level this person has expertise in this field). General Conference Religious Liberty Director, K. C. Russell accepted the invitation to preach at the People's Church on Saturday, February 3. General Conference president Daniells was traveling and Russell proceeded without consent and the door was ajar for the course of action to occur that resulted in the People's Church being received into the sisterhood of churches encompassing the District of Columbia Conference a little longer than a year later.¹¹⁰

In the meantime, the resolve of the second Mrs. Sheafe may have been only one catalyst for Sheafe reversing directions and rejoining the society of the SDA ministry. At the General Conference session of 1913, Sheafe made the acknowledgment that the severing of ties had been a "sad mistake." Daniells, with approximately eight other ministers, both Black and White, spoke affectionately regarding Sheafe and conveyed the happiness they all felt at the restoration. Besides admitting his mistakes, Sheafe consented to willingly receive an appointment to pastor in a setting far away from Washington, DC, a pastorate in Los Angeles, California.¹¹¹ Although the glitter and glisten that previously attended his accomplishments other places made an appearance in Los Angeles, Sheafe's pastorate became embroiled in a disagreement with the Southern California Conference involving his position concerning the writings on racial issues recorded in Volume 9 of the *Testimonies* by Ellen White. Two years after

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

Sheafe's ministry commenced, it had ended.¹¹²

At the same time, the prominence appearance of A. T. Jones in the latter part of 1915, at the People's Church in Washington, DC, added instability to an ultimately explosive environment. Then, in July 1916, Sheafe came back to the People's Church at the behest of the church's pastor, Fred Seeney, to connect in a united evangelistic crusade with Seeney and Jones. Sheafe's interaction combining with a primary opponent of the church's structure, Jones, shut the door on his rejoining the church organization. Seeney, in the final analysis, chose denominational fidelity and left the People's Church. And with Sheafe at the head, the congregation formally announced its autonomy from the denomination in February 1917, ten years to the exact month following Sheafe's first departure.¹¹³

In the twenty years prior to Sheafe's death in 1938, there are several definite positions to be noted. Sheafe and the People's Church, in severing connection with the denomination asserted support and describing themselves as Seventh-day Adventists, kept the name People's Seventh-day Adventist Church to 1925. Sheafe became a credentialed Seventh Day Baptist minister in 1927 and the church name was switched to the Seventh Day Baptist Church.¹¹⁴

The Sheafe desertion or abandonment of the denomination supplied faithful African-American Adventists increased influence for obtaining a larger degree of fair and

¹¹² Morgan, "Lewis Sheafe: *Adventism's Forgotten Apostle to Black America*," 6-7; White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9:206-207.

¹¹³ Morgan, "Lewis Sheafe: *Adventism's Forgotten Apostle to Black America*," 9.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

just dealing with the denomination. The first desertion of 1907 was the stimulus for the creation of the North American Negro Department in 1909. Following the second abandonment which occurred in 1917, the General Conference that had allocated zero dollars for the emergence of African-American establishments in Washington, allocated \$18,000 for property for a church facility and to provide for a school for the new Ephesus Church.¹¹⁵

It should also be pointed out that after the second desertion or abandonment took place in 1917, a change occurred in the leadership of the North American Negro Department in 1918. At the General Conference session of 1918 William H. Green, a bright and distinguished attorney who argued a case before the United States Supreme Court, became the first African-American secretary of the North American Negro Department and the first African-American on the General Conference staff. In spite of Green being elected as the first African-American member of the General Conference staff, due to racial segregation in the church, Green was precluded from fulfilling his responsibilities at the General Conference headquarters, in Washington, D.C., like his three White predecessors in office had. The official yearbook of the SDA Church of 1922 has the director of the North American Negro Department Green with two addresses; one at the denomination headquarters and another location in Detroit, Michigan, Green's official residence. As SDA Church historian, R. Clifford Jones, indicated the fact was, "that Green was working out of his suitcase."¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ R. Clifford Jones, "In Search of Utopia: James K. Humphrey and the Seventh-day Adventists." A paper presented to the Association of Seventh-day Adventist Historians, April 21, 2007, 3.

The Lewis Sheafe case makes a compelling argument for the opportunities that the unique Adventist message might have afforded the SDA Church denomination if it had seized upon them. The opportunity existed for the Adventist Church to be the first, and not the last, in inculcating and incorporating the essence and fundamental truths of its message in racial matters in the denomination's internal practices. There was the opportunity to make clear by example that the SDA Church was against the racism traversing the other churches and also within the totality of American society.

John W. Manns

About 1920, John W. Manns, a Black Seventh-day Adventist pastor in Savannah, Georgia, experienced some difficulties with denominational positions on racial matters and the disconnect between its words and actions. Just like Humphrey, Manns was a minister of extraordinary preaching talent who had been in the forefront in the development of SDA churches in the South. Among the group of congregations he developed was the Savannah church, where reportedly he baptized nearly 160 individuals. Manns committed a serious infraction against church policy by encouraging the Savannah church to hold the deed for its property. He was urged by SDA Church officials to surrender the deed, but he declined the officials' request, indicating that the denominational requirement was racist and "un-Christian." As a result, the Savannah church was dropped from the sisterhood of churches in the latter part of 1920.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ R. Clifford Jones, *James K. Humphrey and the Sabbath-Day Adventists* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2006), 23; J. W. Manns, "Why Free Seventh-day Adventists?" (n.p., Banner Publishing Association, n.d.), 4.

Manns' position on why he separated from the SDA denomination was totally different from that of denominational officials. He maintained the reason he separated from the SDA church organization was to "stand upon the principle advocated by our Father Abraham, when he saw other methods had failed . . . Abraham thus, for what seemed to be good for the two, he and Lot, though brethren, separated." From Manns' perspective, "separations are of a necessity in order to safeguard the interests of all concerned."¹¹⁸

Another cause of the separation was "bigoted white leaders among the Seventh-day Adventists" who supplied the underlying motive "many of the most intelligent [Black] ministers are separated from the denomination, some of whom have become entirely disgusted and have sought other positions, such as doctors of medicine and chiropractic." Manns, asserted with the Apostle Paul, however, that he would permit nothing to "separate us from the love of Christ." Furthermore, Manns was unequivocally declaring, from his standpoint, the General Assembly Free Seventh-day Adventist has not fallen into apostasy, as has been alleged.¹¹⁹

Manns acknowledged that endeavors by White Seventh-day Adventist leaders were commendable nearly thirty-five years ago for [Black] people in the South. He noted that for around ten years Blacks and Whites "experienced little or no difficulty in the North and West in equal enjoyment of religious rights and privileges." The friendly and progressive interaction between the races was altered by the growth in the numbers of

¹¹⁸ Fordham, *Righteous Rebel*, 70.

¹¹⁹ Fordham, *Righteous Rebel*, 70; Manns, "Why Free Seventh-day Adventists?", 4.

Black members which also heightened tensions between the races. Manns describes it this way: church leadership commenced “in a most deceptive and un-Christian way, the work of segregation, in all of their churches East, West, North, and South. This . . . was contrary to their former teachings and profession.” Manns then says that “this unscriptural course” comprised “base acts of prejudice and proscription.”¹²⁰

J. W. Manns clearly affirmed that Ellen G. White was an inspired prophetess or messenger, limits existed: “while we Free Seventh-day Adventists do believe that Sister White was divinely inspired, we do not believe that everything she spoke or wrote was inspired, any more than everything or act done or written by other prophets was inspired.” Manns pointed out that the earlier writings on racial matters, which he was confident “would stand the test of the Bible,” when compared together with later ones, “the candid, fair-minded person,” would see for himself or herself the differences. It was Manns’ settled conviction that volume 9 of the *Testimonies*, which included the ideas on Black-White matters, could not be White’s views, but undoubtedly were the result of denominational officials pressuring her to write what she had written “knowing full well that almost the whole [Black] membership confidently believed in the writings of Mrs. E. G. White.” The “two garbled chapters dealing with the [Black] question” were used by White church officials “to support them in their base acts or prejudice and proscription,” which the Bible did not endorse, Manns thought. He described the two chapters as “rot” and “garbled.”¹²¹

¹²⁰ Manns, “*Why Free Seventh-day Adventists?*” 4.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 4-5, 7.

Manns asserted that the chapters were “junk” written with the purpose of confining “the [Black] ministry and membership in a proscribed place in the denomination with a permanent bar fixed to [Black] leadership.” He was particularly agitated by the assertion of Ellen White when she wrote: “Opportunities are continually presenting themselves in the Southern States, and many wise, Christian [Black] men will be called to the work. But for several reasons white men must be chosen as leaders.” Manns acknowledged that [Blacks] serving in ministry would be individuals of ability and wisdom. These [Black] Christians, however, would be ineligible for leadership merely on the basis of race. The God of the Bible, Manns indicated, “knows no caste or color.” He then referred to Jethro’s counsel to Moses to select men of “ability and character, and not white and black, red or brown,” as leaders.¹²²

The objective of Manns and his supporters was not “social equality” with White people, but in the SDA church to receive “a fair deal.” Manns made the case that Blacks “[were] being denied the rights and privileges which [were] granted to others,” and that Blacks needed to “stand together as a people and work for ourselves.” He stated that “Free Seventh-day Adventists, believe all the fundamental principles of the doctrines as were taught by the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination.” Manns indicated that in creating the Free Seventh-day Adventist it was not an attempt “at reformation of corrupt Christianity” but moreover “a noble effort to secure for ourselves

¹²² *Ibid.*, 9-10.

and our race religious privileges which we could not, nor ever would be able to enjoy among our WHITE BRETHREN - SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS.”¹²³

Manns believed that his separation from the Seventh-day Adventist Church reflected the instruction of Revelation 18:4 to “Come out of her” to separate from those who not in agreement with the truth of God. He described that Protestant reformers like Martin Luther and John Wesley had “bequeathed to the Christian world . . . a heritage of freedom of conscience and religious liberty.” Most Blacks stayed with the denomination, Manns alleged, rather than leaving, putting the organization above this righteous motive, and he designated these people as weak-kneed. He indicated that the organization they have built up served as the rationale of their salvation rather than of their faith in Jesus and His truth.¹²⁴

Manns’ position was that “there is more prejudice in the Seventh-day Adventist Church against [Blacks] than what is to be found in any other denomination under heaven.” He stated that “the prejudice existing in this professed commandment keeping church would shame the Papacy, and make the devil blush.” Manns made the point that SDA denominational leaders’ stance on racial matters was proposed so as not to arouse “the prejudice of the unconverted white people against our denomination.” This situation Manns portrayed as a “lie of their own manufacturing.” Manns expressed no regrets that it cost him his “position as a minister in the denomination,” even though his name had

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 9, 11, 17-18.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 16-17.

been esponded from the denomination's membership rolls, but "not out of the Lamb's Book of Life."¹²⁵

Manns inferred that the explanation for the establishment of the Free Seventh-day Adventists can be summarized on twelve fundamental rational bases, a number of which I have already shown previously. The ninth reason for the Free Seventh-day Adventist Church is "because the white leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination discriminate against [Black] people. They do this . . . discriminating in the organization, the church, the office, the school, the sanitarium, notwithstanding the [Black] membership must make great sacrifices to aid in building up these wonderful institutions now owned by the S.D.A. denomination."¹²⁶

Finally, Manns offers three more reasons for the Free Seventh-day Adventist Church:

Tenth. We are free because [Black] Seventh-day Adventists, as a rule, are barred from Seventh-day Adventist Northern and Western schools, where schools of the world make no distinction among the races.¹²⁷

Eleventh. We are free because the white leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination bar even [Black] Seventh-day Adventist patients from their sanitariums, when the worldly institutions of the same kind, accept [African American] people of every walk of life.¹²⁸

Twelfth. We are free, because [Black] Seventh-day Adventists are barred from holding any clerical position in the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing houses, tract societies, and conference offices.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 13-15.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

Many of the issues cited by Manns here are restated by the Committee for the Advancement of a World-wide Work Among Colored Seventh-day Adventists which means that Manns was ahead of his time.

Historical Overview

What was happening in American Society during this timeframe? The 1920s may be described as a period of prosperity. Unemployment was low while the GNP increased constantly, some Americans did satisfactorily, and installment credit relieved the buyer from paying cash, so consumer debt grew. Anticipation of persistent prosperity also helped to foster speculation. During the Roaring Twenties, Americans encountered important social transformation, as well. The automobile, radio, and movies, aided by immigration limitations, caused there to be a great homogeneous society. At the same time, racial violence and lynching continued. The movie “The Birth of a Nation” ridiculed African-Americans and aroused racial hostility.¹³⁰

A so-called “knowledgeable specialist” presented “evidence” that people of color were subordinate and were dangerous to America’s heterogeneous pure breed. The Ku Klux Klan had nationwide growth, as millions of White men became members and various other Americans backed it. Then in 1925 its membership fell precipitously, when the Indiana Grand Dragon of the KKK was indicted and convicted for rape of his

¹³⁰ Berkin et al, eds., *Making America*, 748; Hine, Hine, Harrold, *The African-American Odyssey*, 453-454.

secretary and her death due to suicide. African-American laborers experienced hardly any improvement, due to discrimination by labor organizations against them.¹³¹

There was, however, various real definite progress in the 1920s, providing confidence for a better future for Blacks. The NAACP became a formidable institution, as it battled for anti-lynching laws in Congress and civil and political justice in the legal arena. The NAACP membership surpassed 100,000 in the 1920s. Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) became the biggest mass workers' movement of African-Americans in history. Garvey, proposed racial dignity and self-worth as hundreds of thousands of African-Americans became members.¹³² James K. Humphrey like Garvey, proposed the Utopia Park Benevolent Association to improve the overall situation for Blacks, even non-members.

Finally, the Harlem Renaissance provided an outpouring of art, literature, and music by Black Americans. The Renaissance is significant because it permitted reflective and artistic men and women to wrestle with the meaning of being Black in a culture in which the Black minority was deemed to be subordinate. The Harlem Renaissance was a cultural unveiling unparalleled in African-American history. As a result, Black people were less apt to be viewed in a degraded manner.¹³³

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, Berkin et al, eds; *Making America*, 748; Hine, Hine, Harrold, *The African American Odyssey*, 452-454.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*

James Kemuel Humphrey

On March 7, 1877, James Kemuel Humphrey was born in Jamaica, West Indies. Humphrey commenced his career as a Baptist clergyman shortly after his marriage in December, 1900. In 1901, Humphrey departed Jamaica to travel to Africa, laying over in New York City for a short tourist tour, an act which transformed his life's purpose. While still on this layover, Humphrey walked in on a home study group (the format of which consisted of a group of four to five that met weekly for about an hour to share joys, blessings, disappointments at the beginning of the meeting, to study the Bible and discuss the Bible after members studied alone during the week, and engaged in prayer for each member of the group and kept a prayer list). The meeting was at the home of J. H. Carroll (Adventist layman who had converted from Catholicism to Adventism). Humphrey was so impressed by the straightforwardness and way of reasoning of what he was presented, that he joined the Adventist Church, leaving the Baptist ministry and terminating his travel to Africa.¹³⁴

In 1903, Humphrey was selected to head a small group of ten Adventists that developed from Carroll's efforts. The next year Humphrey served as a licensed missionary with the Greater New York Conference and was subsequently ordained as a Seventh-day Adventist minister in 1907. The same year, he was extended an invitation to be a member of the executive committee of the Atlantic Union Conference. Later, after the North American Negro Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists was organized in 1909, Humphrey was selected to serve on its executive

¹³⁴ R. Clifford Jones, *James K. Humphrey and the Sabbath-Day Adventists* (Jackson, Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2006), 4.

committee. Humphrey was selected as a delegate from the Atlantic Union Conference to the General Conference session of 1913. As a talented evangelist and minister, he conducted a number of tent meetings in New York City, particularly the Borough of Manhattan. The outcome of the evangelistic efforts was that by 1920 there was an increase in membership of the First Harlem SDA Church, with Humphrey as the pastor, enjoyed an increase in membership to 600. There were four African-American churches in the Greater New York Conference at the finish of 1922, and he was the overseer for all of them.¹³⁵

The increase in membership as a result of evangelism was so great that First Harlem, on January 1, 1924, established Harlem Number Two with 108 members. At that point, Harlem Number Two was voted into the sisterhood of Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventist churches. In the subsequent two months, the membership stood at 125. During the 1920s Humphrey functioned as a minister of the Seventh-day Adventist Church with foresight and honor, guiding Harlem Number One to a place of supremacy and conspicuousness in the Greater New York Conference. From 1920 to 1927, Humphrey baptized in excess of 300 individuals. Humphrey was the driving force behind Black churches being organized in Jamaica, New York City, and New Rochelle, New York. The inspirational and gifted leader played a major part in the Greater New York Conference session during the 1920s, involving that of session secretary.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

¹³⁶ Jones, *James K. Humphrey and the Sabbath-Day Adventist*, 7-9; Jones, "In Search of Utopia," James K. Humphrey and the Sabbath-Day Adventists (a paper presented to Association of Seventh-day

For nearly the whole span of his service as a Seventh-day Adventist minister, however, Humphrey had presented racial matters before the denomination's officials, pushing for a transformation that would have, as its consequence, self-determination for Blacks and hoping that the denomination's words and behavior would coincide. As the 1920s came to an end, Humphrey's tolerance began to run out. He concluded that the denomination was not serious about effecting significant changes in the situation confronted by Blacks in the denomination. Unfortunately, the denomination's disposition and plans for educating African-Americans in its educational establishments basically remained the same from 1919 to 1929. Then in 1929 a member of First Harlem made application for admittance into the nursing program for medical training at the College of Medical Evangelists in California (now Loma Linda University). Mrs. Beryl Holness was informed by the College of Medical Evangelists that her application for admission had been rejected on the basis of her "nationality." Holness, from a prominent Black family, was denied admission at the same time Humphrey was in a battle over the issue of race with the Greater New York Conference and that only inflamed the situation.¹³⁷

Nevertheless, the Seventh-day Adventist Church was not indifferent to the conditions of African-Americans. During the 1929 Autumn Council of the General Conference Committee, the council devoted a significant amount of time investigating the concerns of African-Americans and the work performed by Blacks in the United States. The year before, W. H.. Green, who headed the North American Negro Department for nearly 10 years, had died, causing a leadership gap in the Black work.

Adventist Historian, (April 21, 2007), 1.

¹³⁷ Jones, "Search of Utopia," 3-4.

Included in the formal proposals from the Fall Council of 1926 was the request for earnest investigation to be considered into the possibility of setting up a school for African-Americans in the North.¹³⁸

During the spring meeting of the SDA denomination (a meeting where proposals and recommendations are discussed and examined and committees established to make formal recommendations and vote on them at the Autumn or Fall Council), the Black Caucus had voted a formal proposal suggesting the establishment of regional conferences that would have the same relationship to the Union and General Conference as other conferences. This proposal also stated that with regional conferences Blacks would oversee and direct their funds, hire and fire their own employees, would handle the bestowal and transfer of property, and would carry out plans and insights in regard to the Black work. Thus, the regional conference concept was an effort by African-Americans in the SDA Church to have self-determination. This petition by the African-American church leadership, from their perspective, would result in real substantialism and conformity to the “separate but equal” situation that was the reality in the SDA denomination.¹³⁹

Following the spring meeting of the Adventist Church leadership, Humphrey started advancing the concept of an all-Black commune. Humphrey designated this proposal or plan The Utopia Park Health Benevolent Association, which was comparable with Marcus Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association plan in a rough sort of

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹³⁹ Fordham, *Righteous Rebel*, 71.

way. The primary aim and intent of the Utopia Park plan were imposing. Utopia Park (the name by which it was known) was to furnish African-Americans with an atmosphere contributing to their physical, psychological, and social welfare, as well as supply people with favorable job opportunities. Utopia Park was to be under Black ownership, to function and be settled by Blacks, and it was to be totally nonsectarian.¹⁴⁰

At the inception, Utopia Park was to be situated in Wappinger Falls, New York, a little town around seven miles from Poughkeepsie. However, due to difficulties with that site Humphrey decided on an estate in the Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey. Highly recommended as the “Fortune Spot of America for Colored People,” Utopia Park was comprised of sixteen acres of rolling hills caressing a gigantic lake including three little lakes. This was Humphrey’s vision of creating a commune where African-Americans could excel and encounter a degree of self-sufficiency in their overall lives and duplicate the utopian commune of pre-Civil War America.¹⁴¹

It was in this context that, on August 13, 1929, Louis K. Dickson, the president of the Greater New York Conference, promptly sent a letter to James K. Humphrey declaring he had acquired information that Humphrey and his congregations were in the process of starting a “colored colony, sanitarium, and old people’s home.” The Greater New York Conference president alleged he was ‘totally in the dark regarding the facts’ concerning the plan and asked that Humphrey furnish him with the knowledge that would put him “straight on the matter.” Approximately one week afterwards, Humphrey replied, notifying the president that what was conveyed to him was correct; he then

¹⁴⁰ Jones, “Search of Utopia,” 5.

¹⁴¹ Jones, *James K. Humphrey and the Sabbath-Day Adventist*, 31.

signified that the project was not denominationally originated or connected. Humphrey then expressed appreciation to Dickson for his “expression of kind interest” in the plan and his “desire to cooperate in this good work,” however, he stated to the president that Utopia Park was “absolutely a problem for the colored people.”¹⁴² Humphrey in referring “it absolutely a problem for the colored people” is stating it is a matter the Black people would handle themselves.

It was virtually impossible for Dickson to comprehend Humphrey’s reply, thus depicting Humphrey as being a spurner by not apprising him clearly of the various aspects of the plan “as entirely unsatisfactory and disappointing.” Dickson’s back-up correspondence urged Humphrey to think about his responsibilities as a conference worker, which involved consulting with conference officials on an undertaking such as Utopia Park. Humphrey refused to be up front, however, causing Dickson to put the issue on the agenda of the September 5, 1929, Executive Committee meeting of the Greater New York Conference, of which Humphrey was also a member. Now Humphrey was presented with the chance to construe the venture so he could therefore profit from the “counsel of his associates in the ministry.” He, instead, made a few superficial comments, letting the committee remain “as much in the dark as to the real status of the situation” as it was prior to the meeting. Baffled with Humphrey’s disposition, Dickson was impelled to forward the situation to the Atlantic Union Conference Executive Committee. Atlantic Union Conference president E. K. Slade was an attendee of the September 5 meeting of the Executive Committee of the Greater New York Conference.

¹⁴² Jones, “Search of Utopia,” 5.

Dickson had the expectation that Humphrey, also a member of the Executive Committee of the Conference, would be more straightforward in that setting. Humphrey and Utopia Park were put on the agenda of the Atlantic Union Executive Committee scheduled for October 27, 1929.¹⁴³

Unfortunately, Humphrey did not appear at that consequential meeting which provided a “careful and sympathetic study” to Humphrey and the Utopia Park venture. The meeting concluded with a unanimous vote calling for the Greater New York Conference to withdraw Humphrey’s ministerial credentials “until such time as he straightens out this situation in a way that will remove the reproach” his behavior has caused. The Union Executive Committee derived its conclusions on the information and evidence that Humphrey was involved in a “sideline” in opposition to the organizational procedures of the denomination and that he had continually declined to inform church leadership of his involvements at their behest. Then Humphrey excused himself from attending proceedings where this issue was being examined for discourse and consideration and concerned raised that this venture might open the church to lawsuits of a “serious nature.”¹⁴⁴

In spite of that, the Greater New York Conference provided Humphrey an additional occasion to engage in a discussion. Thus, on October 31, 1929, the Conference Executive Committee, now with Humphrey present, met together. Also in attendance was E. K. Slade, Atlantic Union Conference president. The earnest appeal of

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

the committee was an attempt “to help Elder Humphrey to see his mistakes,” but their appeal was “inadequate to change Humphrey.” His refusal necessitated the Executive Committee voting to rescind Humphrey’s ministerial credentials. Humphrey received official notification that he had no authority to function as pastor of First Harlem SDA Church or to speak or act on behalf of the church organization. Furthermore, he was no longer a member of either the Greater New York Conference or the Atlantic Union Conference Executive Committee.¹⁴⁵

As it were, November 2, 1929, was a momentous day for both James K. Humphrey and the membership of the First Harlem Seventh-day Adventist Church. On this day (a Saturday or Sabbath), Humphrey delivered his final sermon as the pastor of the First Harlem SDA Church. Humphrey’s final sermon was named and derived from the first of the Ten Commandments, “Thou Shalt Have No Other Gods,” and inexplicably Humphrey wept during every part of the sermon. It appears rather uncertain if denominational officials were in attendance at the church service that morning. There is no doubt that they were present for the business meeting of the First Harlem SDA Church that evening. In attendance that evening were W. A. Spicer, President of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and C. K. Meyer, Secretary of the General Conference, E. K. Slade, President of the Atlantic Union Conference, and Louis K. Dickson, President of the Greater New York Conference.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ Jones, *James K. Humphrey and the Sabbath-Day Adventist*, 35.

¹⁴⁶ Jones, “Search of Utopia,” 5-6.

The business meeting began with Dickson improperly asserting that the business meeting was being held at the behest of Humphrey. Dickson, reading from a written document, indicated that denominational leaders were present to “talk over” with the church members an issue of enormous significance to the First Harlem SDA Church, to the church organization, and the “cause of God.” Then Dickson stated that he regarded as unfortunate the “much to be deplored crisis” that had been forced on them by the behavior and disposition of Humphrey. Dickson went to extraordinary lengths to convince the church members that denominational officials had an enduring concern in the well-being and SDA Church endeavors vis a vis Blacks collectively in Harlem.¹⁴⁷

Dickson described Humphrey as a person possessing “large ability” that God had remarkably showered on him with special favor. But Humphrey’s dabbling in a risky real estate “promotion and colonization enterprise” was a clear sign of “disregard for the well-established policies and regulations of the denomination.” Dickson then avowed that solidarity was a heritage and seal of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, stating that unity was “one of our most sacred legacies and our most potent weapon against the assaults of the enemy of all truth.”¹⁴⁸

At this point, Dickson apprised the First Harlem SDA Church members that Humphrey, in opposition to his declaration that the church organization had been deficient in its attention and interest for Blacks in an overall way and himself specifically, had rejected the attempts by church officials to fix, to some extent, Black-White matters

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

in a corporate manner. Particularly, Humphrey had been selected for a specific committee chosen at the 1929 Spring Council of denominational leadership to examine the possibility of Black conferences. However, Dickerson asserted their pastor had neglected to be present at a single meeting convened by the committee, when Dickerson knew at the time he stated this that the Fall Council had already convened and voted against [Black] Conferences. Dickerson pleaded with the First Harlem SDA Church members to “take their stand as loyal supporters of order and organization in the church of Christ.” He emphasized to them that their loyalty was “to God and to His church, and not to one individual.”¹⁴⁹

The meeting of November 2, 1929, continued for five tumultuous hours. The First Harlem SDA Church members stood in nearly total uniformity with their pastor, as manifested by the vote of 695 to 5 in support of Humphrey. The First Harlem SDA congregation called for the Greater New York Conference to give back the deed to their property (property deeds are held in trust by the conference). Afterwards, Dickson depicted the response of the First Harlem SDA Church on the evening of November 2, 1929, as “open rebellion” in upholding Humphrey. President Dickson alleged that Humphrey had evidently presented himself in the guise of a modern-day Moses with the aim of guiding his people out of the bondage of deprived membership rights and White tyranny to the promised land of freedom and empowerment. Dickson further alleged that

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

the “wild confusion and uproar” of that disastrous night bore witness to the “disrespect of the presence, counsel, and advice of the leaders of the denomination.”¹⁵⁰

The Greater New York Conference Executive Committee passed two actions regarding First Harlem SDA Church on January 14, 1930. These actions were enacted based on the foundation that the First Harlem SDA Church had behaved incongruently with the tenets of the SDA Church and had disregarded its responsibilities to the Greater New York Conference. The first actions indicated that First Harlem SDA Church should be removed from the sisterhood of churches of the Greater New York Conference and the second made provision for the establishment of the few individuals still faithful to the SDA Church into a new congregation. A third action was voted calling for the First Harlem SDA Church to dispatch delegates to the future biennial Conference session with the intention of stating evidence that would be vindication of their actions. First Harlem SDA Church did not dispatch any delegates to the Conference session, a session that voted almost unanimously to disfellowship (drop) the church. A little while after that, Humphrey and his members created an autonomous African-American institution, the United Sabbath Day Adventists.¹⁵¹

Perhaps one of the explanations for the Utopia Park circumstances finally concluding in the revoking of Humphrey’s ministerial credentials was caused by the Seventh-day Adventist officials’ failure to comprehend the primary important position of the Black minister in African-American society. It is, therefore, easy to understand that

¹⁵⁰ Jones, *James K. Humphrey and the Sabbath-Day Adventist*, 15-16.

¹⁵¹ Jones, “In Search of Utopia,” 6-7.

on the night of November 2, 1929, that Humphrey obtained almost unanimous support from the congregation for his behavior and disposition. The backing he garnered from his members was not a result of a naiveté that possibly could be utilized by a conniving spiritual leader, but it was a result of a deep affection and regard Black parishioners had for their ministers from an historic standpoint.¹⁵²

SDA denominational officials, besides, misinterpreted the community and political forces involved in Black society throughout the 1920s. This period was charged with traces of Pan-Africanism and the Harlem Renaissance generated an astonishing number of creative efforts as artists, writers, musicians, and entertainers joyously commemorated African-American culture. Humphrey lived during the same period as Marcus Garvey, who was able to create the first mass African-American working class movement in America with an emphasis on economic and political self-determination. So it is evident that Humphrey's push for self-determination was shaped and fixed by the wider Black community's search for independence and sway in the 1920s. Both Garvey and Humphrey desired that Black people should achieve their real purpose to cast off the collar of tyranny that had virtually retarded the thrust to self-realization and autonomy.¹⁵³

The rescinding of Humphrey's ministerial credentials and the removal of the First Harlem SDA Church from the Greater New York Conference was unable to silence or halt Humphrey's drive for African-American agency in the SDA Church. Humphrey's personal encounter stimulated Seventh-day Adventist Blacks, supplying them with a

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁵³ Jones, *James K. Humphrey and the Sabbath-Day Adventist*, 41-42.

perceptible matter about which they might concentrate their strength in their conflict for increased autonomy in the denomination. What happened with Humphrey and Utopia Park in the SDA Church furnished persuasive proof of the flimsiness of racial matters in the SDA church during this period and the truth that racial problems were not limited to the South. No more could the SDA denomination repudiate the fact that Blacks confronted hardships in their push for justice and fairness in America and in that regard in the SDA Church. Utopia Park demonstrated this situation concerning race relations. The Utopia Park affair (failed and all the money was returned to its investors) functioned as the stimulus that spurred the establishment of regional conferences fifteen years afterwards and which had a basic influence on race relations in the denominations.¹⁵⁴ In contrast to Sheafe, Manns, Humphrey, and some others, Black Adventists have placed Adventist affiliation in advance of the resolution of racial issues, but at the same time they have worked to rectify and remedy the racial issues from the inside.

Structural Changes in the SDA Church

Additional changes of a structural nature were accomplished in the spring of 1926 at a combined committee meeting of the Southeastern, Southern, and Southwestern Union Conferences. The meeting, conducted in Nashville, Tennessee, attempted to acknowledge African-American leadership on both the union and local conference level. The intention was to foster a structure that would permit Black leaders to employ their gifts in laboring for Blacks in the South.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ Jones, "Search for Utopia," 1, 8.

¹⁵⁵ Fordham, *Righteous Rebel*, 67, 135.

Elder J. L. McElhaney, vice-president of the General Conference, at this same meeting suggested that they develop a definite program to improve the efforts and to support the Black congregations. This approach endorsed the selection of a seasoned Black to be the leader in every union and local conference. The designated position for that leader would be referred to as “evangelist” and that individual would direct the work of the colored department of his union or conference.¹⁵⁶

At the 1926 session of General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists among the recommendations for a reorganization of the Negro Department was this:

That besides the secretary, there be three members of the Negro Department committee to sit with the Fall Councils, and at such times as the General Conference Committee may deem advisable. It was also recommended that [Black] work in the Southeastern, Southern, and Southwestern union conferences be composed of the “union president the union secretary and treasurer, the union Negro Superintendent, the local conference presidents, and the superintendent [evangelist] of each local conference; the union conference president to be chairman of this committee. Then, that a Negro Department Committee be established of the local conference president and the secretary-treasurer, the Negro members. The actions of the executive committee and department committee regarding the colored work meeting jointly, shall be final.”¹⁵⁷

The last General Conference recommendation states:

Where the development and better prosecution of the work for our people require better attention, there should be appointed such assistant secretaries as helpers of the various departments of the several unions in the South, as are required to look after and care for the development of the colored work.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 136.

¹⁵⁷ *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, vol. 103, no 33 (June 14, 1926): 4-5.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

The suggestions from the General Conference were intended to strengthen the Negro Department by the reorganization and the appointment of additional personnel.

The disillusionment of J. K. Humphrey with the SDA Church leadership may be seen in all the unfulfilled promises and commitments. At the Fall Council that Humphrey attended in 1926, in a subtitle called the *Colored School Work in the North*, it stated:

After considering carefully the present status and needs of our colored work in the North, we desire to submit the following statement and recommendations:

1. We look with keen sympathy upon the educational needs of our colored membership in the North. We believe the time has come when definite, constructive effort should be made to strengthen and extend our school facilities for giving a Christian education to the large number of boys and girls in our growing colored churches.

2. We recommend that, in harmony with the assurances already given our colored brethren, we look forward to the development of a boarding academy when the time seems ripe for it from the viewpoint of the foundation laid in these stronger day schools, and when such an enterprise can be adequately financed without debt.¹⁵⁹

What is most unfortunate is that neither of the voted recommendations, either at the General Conference session of 1926 or the Fall Council of 1926, were totally or even partially achieved. In 1929, at the Autumn Council held at Columbus, Ohio, September 24 to October 2, another significant suggestions involving the structure of the Black work in the United States was passed. Earlier reference was made to the fact that the first African-American, William H. Green, elected to the General Conference staff could not have an office in the General Conference headquarters.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ "Colored School in the North," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, vol. 103, no. 54 (November 4, 1926): 11-12.

¹⁶⁰ Fordham, *Righteous Rebel*, 68, 135.

The Fall Council in 1929 voted to continue the current organization structure adopted at the Spring Council of 1929. In the North the Black Union evangelist (secretary) would be a member of the union conference executive committee and be requested to participate on the Autumn Councils; and in conferences in the North in which there were 500 [Black] members, a [Black] minister of experience should be a member of the local conference committee. All the Black union secretaries and other individuals that the General Conference selects would establish the General Conference Negro Department Advisory Committee and make recommendation concerning the [Black] work. The primary responsibilities of these secretaries in strengthening the [Black] constituencies were to hold evangelistic efforts by assisting evangelists with their efforts, by helping to train young preachers and workers, by helping to foster real soul-winning work in each of the churches and conferences and by cooperating in all lines of department and church activities.¹⁶¹

In 1929, G.E. Peters, a talented evangelist and one of the most progressive Black leaders ever, was elected to the office. At the General Conference session, June 12, 1930, in San Francisco under Peter's leadership, these recommendations were made:

- a. That the General Conference Committee select one of our representative [Black] ministers to fill the office of secretary of the Negro Department.
- b. That this secretary locate in Washington, D.D., having his headquarters at the General Conference office.
- c. That in giving general supervision to the colored work throughout North America, he work under the counsel of the General Conference Committee as do all other General Conference departmental secretaries.¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ "Negro Department," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, vol. 106, no. 46 (November 14, 1929): 7.

¹⁶² Fordham, *Righteous Rebel*, 138-139.

The above voted recommendation by the General Conference Session, June 12, 1930 were an attempt to indicate that confidence was being placed in Black leadership in the SDA Church.

White Leaders Reject the Idea of [Black] Regional Conferences

But the more specific issue that developed occurred earlier in 1929, at the Spring Council meeting at the General Conference in Washington, D.C., African-American leaders conducted a meeting and presented a recommendation concerning the work among Blacks in North America. The Black leaders believed that the best way to reach the [Black] people with the third angel's message would be to organize [Black] conferences. In these conferences they could handle their own money, employ their own workers, develop institutions, and generally promote the work along their own cultural lines. These conferences would have the same relationship to the General Conference as the White conferences.¹⁶³

At the Spring Council, the General Conference Committee declined to vote for the recommendation, although, they did not discard it entirely. Rather, the General Conference Committee selected a special committee to examine the prudence of the recommendation and would be ready to present a recommendation for the Fall Council planned for September 24 to October 2, 1929, in Columbus, Ohio. The special committee to examine the recommendation concerning Black conferences had sixteen members, of which eleven were White and only five were African-American.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 71.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

This plan represented a greater degree of involvement. However, this resulted in the Black ministers continued lack of a meaningful utterance in the policies and judgment determining groups of the denomination. The problem was that, based on the report of the special committee, the Fall Council voted to reject the Black leaders' recommendations and instead decided to continue the same plan previously voted, but now in the North and not just the South. The recommendation by Black leaders for Black conferences was overwhelmingly rejected at the 1929 Fall Council. It is reported that White officials, in denunciatory language, stated: "[Black] Conferences are out of the question. Don't ever ask for a [Black] conference again."¹⁶⁵

To further add insult to injury, another proposal was offered regarding establishing a "[Black] school in the North." The earlier was limited to a boarding academy for Black young people in the North, however, this proposal appeared to be even more extensive in its scope. The problem with this initiative was that Blacks would have no input and, like the proposal in 1926, it would go nowhere at any time. Entitled "[Black] School in the North," the recommendation read similar to the following:

Whereas the [Black] constituency in the North has greatly increased in recent years, and Whereas the large number of [Black] youth demand that suitable facilities for a boarding school of academic grade be provided where the youth of the [Black] race can receive a Christian education without embarrassment to anyone;

We recommend, 1. That a committee be appointed at this Autumn Council, whose duty it shall be to study the question of location, student capacity, suitable industries, etc., of such a school, and that this committee report to the General Conference Minority Committee. 2. That the Autumn Council be asked, through the proper committee, to provide a plan for financing the purchase and equipment

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 71-72.

of the school plant in harmony with the policy of the General Conference governing the establishment of all new projects.¹⁶⁶

All the proposals by Blacks were turned down in 1929.

Historical Overview

Although the Black proposal was turned down in 1929, between 1929 and 1939, a consequential transformation occurred in the essence of American life, modifying the outlook of government, economics, and American society. When Herbert Hoover became president in 1929, the majority of Americans thought that their life and American society would do better. The Depression, however, altered that perspective, as unemployment rose to unheard of levels, and people parted with their homes and high expectations for what would happen. Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected president with the broad prospective for a significant change in the part government would play in the lives of Americans. Roosevelt's New Deal was started, attempted to restore economic development to assist millions of destitute Americans, and established corrections that additionally made adjustments to guarantee a more fair society. The First Hundred Days saw a stream of bills passed, most confronting the difficulties of unemployment and breakdown of the economy.¹⁶⁷

The government pursued a program of economic recovery in 1933 through the National Recovery Administration, the Agriculture Adjustment Act, the Federal Emergency Relief Act, Home Owners' Loan Corporation, Emergency Banking Relief Act, the Tennessee Valley Authority Act, the Beer and Wine Revenue Act, the Federal

¹⁶⁶ "Negro Department," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, 7.

¹⁶⁷ Berkin, et al, eds., *Making America*, 784.

Deposit Insurance Corporation under the Bank Act of 1933, Public Work Administration, Civil Works Administration, and the Civil Conservation Corp. In 1934 the government undertook Reciprocal Trade Agreements, the National Housing Act, the Federal Housing Authority, the Gold Reserve Act, the Indian Reorganization and Securities and Exchange Act. The Roosevelt Administration in 1935 further advanced its economic program through the Rural Electrification Administration, the Resettlement Administration, the Public Utility Holding Company Act, the National Youth Administration, the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allocation Act, the Work Progress Administration, and the Social Security Act. In 1937 the Roosevelt Administration provided economic assistance through the Farm Security Administration and the Wagner-Steagall Act.¹⁶⁸

A political shift happened during the 1930s for African-Americans. Both Black men and women changed parties, from the Republican Party to the Democratic Party. The NAACP became the most influential civil rights organization within the Black community. The New Deal provided Blacks with aid through the national welfare programs such as the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, the Civilian Conservation Corps, Public Work Administration, the Civil Works Administration, and the Work Progress Administration.

In 1933, the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) provided for long-term economic revival. The NIRA created the agency of the National Recovery Administration which under the national industrial codes to increase wages resulted in the transfer of Blacks out of jobs they dominated and in Whites receiving their jobs. For

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 774.

Blacks, the NRA stood for “Negro Removal Agency” or “Negroes Robbed Again.”

Under the National Labor Relations Act, unions were able to organize the nation’s great masses of industrial workers. The most effective in organizing Blacks was the newly established Committee (later Congress) of Industrial Organizations, which admitted Blacks and women into its unions. The most outstanding Black labor leader was A. Philip Randolph of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters that stayed in the American Federation of Labor. The New Deal also resulted in a political alliance that would ultimately confront the nation’s racial policies. The Works Progress Administration financially backed a variety of Black creative art forms, in music, literature, the arts, and film and radio that caused African-Americans to have an unparalleled influence on American culture.¹⁶⁹

Roosevelt desired to have a more active position in international relations but was hindered in that by isolationism and his judgment to confront the Depression in the United States. Most Americans were still interested in the U.S. remaining neutral, even after Germany invaded Poland in 1939. Roosevelt reformulated the American isolationist perspective to assist in battling Germany and connecting U.S. economic strength to first England and even the Soviet Union.¹⁷⁰

For Black Americans the drive for racial justice in the military and at home became a central aspect of the continual struggle for advancement in the economic, political, and social arena. President Roosevelt’s Executive Order #8802 was an important change in the government’s position regarding discrimination against Black workers in defense

¹⁶⁹ Hine, Hine, and Harrold, *The African American Odyssey*, 467, 471-472, 483, 511.

¹⁷⁰ Berkin, et al, *Making America*, 825.

industries and government agencies charged with training workers to administer such programs without discrimination... ...The Fair Employment Practice Commission was set up to protect the employment rights of Blacks and other minorities and was empowered to investigate complaints of discrimination.¹⁷¹

Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, resulted in mobilizing the American people and government for World War II. The War brought the Depression to a conclusion and enlarged government involvement in the economic system. World War II had widespread results for African-Americans both on the home front in fighting discrimination in employment and training and in fighting discrimination in the military. The NAACP membership grew from 50,000 to 450,000 by the conclusion of the War. The outstanding accomplishments of the Tuskegee Airmen and other all Black units, including Mabel Stamper's efforts against discrimination of Black nurses, caused African-American soldiers to have a renewed idea of who they were and a commitment to battle for racial equality. These aims, of course, spilled over into the civilian world among Blacks as a people.¹⁷²

Conclusion

Elder G. E. Peters, at the 1941 Fall Council, who had been selected General Conference Regional Secretary (the name was changed from Negro to Colored in 1927 and subsequently from Colored to Regional referring to the geographical jurisdiction of the department) gave this outstanding report:

¹⁷¹ Hine, Hine, and Harrold, *The African American Odyssey*, 522, 538.

¹⁷² Berkin, et al, *Making America*, 825; Hine, Hine, and Harrold, *The African American Odyssey*, 533, 529, 528, 538.

Brother Chairman, I believe that we are all convinced that the Negro Department has made wonderful advances and achievements through the years. We have grown from 900 believers in 1909 to 14,537 at the close of 1940. In 1923 the receipts were \$16,323 from the Colored constituency; during the past five years (1936-1940) the tithe paid was \$1,112,000. In the same period, mission offerings amounted to \$703,000, as compared with \$3,000 in 1912. Would you not agree that the Colored Seventh-day Adventist is more an asset than a liability? Looking over records from foreign mission work, we find conclusively that larger dividends are realized by the body when leadership roles are entrusted to native workers. It is obvious from the statistics that the Colored work has made greater advances on souls won and money gained since the work has been shouldered by Colored Workers.¹⁷³

The Lucy Byard Incident

Because of the general situation in the country, preoccupation with the Great Depression, and especially World War II, no significant action was taken from 1930 to 1943. However, in 1943, a long-standing Adventist, a Mrs. Byard, a light-skinned Black woman from Brooklyn, New York, was brought to the Washington Sanitarium and Hospital. At first Mrs. Byard was admitted, but before her treatment commenced, her admission slip was re-examined, her racial ancestry was learned, the admission clerk notified her there was an error in her being admitted. With neither treatment test of her condition, Lucy Byard remained in the hallway of the hospital until transported by motor vehicle to the Freeman's Hospital where she later died of pneumonia. This example, with other cases of racial prejudice, aroused the Black members, specifically in the Washington area, to demand that the General Conference guarantee this type of circumstances would never occur again.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ Fordham, *Righteous Rebel*, 140.

¹⁷⁴ Louis B. Reynolds, *We Have Tomorrow: The Story of American Seventh-day Adventists with an African Heritage* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1984), 293-294; Jacob Justice, *Angels in Ebony* (Toledo, OH: Jet Printing Service, 1975), 43-46.

The Committee for the Advancement of a World-Wide Work among Colored Seventh-day Adventists

The case at the Washington Sanitarium ignited the fire that led to the action that resulted in the establishment of Regional Conferences. In 1944 a group of Black laymen from the Ephesus Church in Washington established the National Association for the Advancement for a Worldwide Work Among Colored Seventh-day Adventists. The committee was led by Joseph T. Dobson, Chairperson. This committee pushed for stopping racial quotas in SDA schools, addressed the absence of Black workers on the various echelons of the church organization, and unfettered access for Blacks into the church's sanitariums and hospitals. They cited non-Adventist institutions that had dropped the color bar and pointed out that Adventists were behind even secular institutions in race relations.¹⁷⁵ The matter of Regional Conferences had been under review and consideration before the special spring meeting in Chicago, April 8-14, 1944, to discuss the formation of Black conferences.¹⁷⁶

The committee, in a document called "Shall the Four Freedoms Function Among Seventh-day Adventists?" charged that "non-Adventist institutions in Maryland use no such subterfuges (excuses had been cited for policies of bigotry claiming White clientele would resent it). Johns Hopkins Hospital of Maryland accepts [Black] patients; Sandy Springs Hospital of Maryland accepts Black patients." The committee established the

¹⁷⁵ Justice, *Angels in Ebony*, 44; Joseph T. Dodson, Chair, "Shall the Four Freedoms Function Among Seventh-day Adventists?" Committee for the Advancement of a Worldwide Work Among Colored Seventh-day Adventists (Washington, DC: General Conference Archives, 1944), 2.

¹⁷⁶ Fordham, *Righteous Rebel*, 76.

requirement of Black representation on significant committees at all levels, whether local, union, or General Conference. Like Humphrey and Manns, the committee addressed the situation of property purchased by Black congregations, but the deeds were kept by totally White committees: “Deeds of churches and other properties are held by the conference legal associations--deeds to institutions occupied by [Black] Adventists; yet no [Black] Adventist is a member of the association.”¹⁷⁷

The document of the committee aggressively addressed the denominational structure of the General Conference when it stated that: “The office of the secretary of the Colored Department does not carry with it enough administrative authority, jurisdiction and equipment. In the eyes of the laity it seems to be in matters pertaining to the impartial progress of colored group, powerless to function adequately.” The pamphlet also stated that: “Conference officials encourage our ministers and workers to be frank in declaring the needs of their own people.” What the document was requesting was that there be a more purposeful integration of the organization of the SDA denomination. For example, it requested a minimum of one General Conference clerical office job and other small signs of total integration. Recommendations that SDA “sanitariums, hospitals, and educational institutions discontinue the un-Christian policy of discrimination toward [Black] people” were put forward. In addition, the committee indicated that “the ‘quota’ policy of our institutions of higher learning be discontinued.”¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ Dodson, Chair, “Shall the Four Freedoms Function Among Seventh-day Adventist?” 3

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

Regional Conference—Introduced

Elder J. L. McElhaney, General Conference president, was the one who introduced the issue of separate conferences. He called for a special pre-Spring Council meeting April 8-14, 1944, of a select number of laymen, Black ministers and local conference and union presidents to discuss the situation of separate Black conferences. Elder McElhaney chaired the meeting and stated to the delegates that the General Conference had taken under advisement the question of Black conferences.¹⁷⁹ There was recognition of a need for a more meaningful position in the church for Blacks.

It is interesting that Elder McElhaney had not initially desired to make the presentation for Black conferences. But he was strongly encouraged by Elder George Peters to make the presentation because it would be more favorably received if the concept came from Elder McElhaney who was considered one of the greatest advocates of Black conferences of the White leaders. In McElhaney's powerful statement, he declared,

To me it is wonderful to see that the [Blacks] have large churches efficiently led and directed by [Black] men. We have some [Black] churches with more members than we have in some conferences. I think our colored men do a very good job. This gives me confidence in their being leaders. To say that a man could be a pastor of a 1,000 member church but he couldn't direct a 1,000 membership church if they were divided into conferences seems to be inconsistent in reasoning.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ *Minutes*, Pre-Spring Council, Chicago, IL (April 8, 1944), 1-2.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

On April 10, a special committee commissioned to investigate the feasibility of Black conferences made recommendations to the special meeting. The special committee also examined establishing a Black medical facility in the North and the development of the Riverside Sanitarium. This special committee also suggested that a [Black] editor be selected for *Message Magazine* (a Black religious journal of the SDA Church). However, the primary proposal involved the forming of Black conferences in unions where a significant Black membership existed. The proposal stated that these conferences would have the same status and relationship as White conferences in their various unions. All of these recommendations were unanimously voted by the delegates.¹⁸¹

In August of 1944, the proposal was put in place concerning the establishment of the Lake Region Conference. On September 26, 1944, at 10:00 a.m., Black delegates of the Lake Union Conference voted “to organize the Lake Union Conference [Black] members into a [Black] conference.” The chosen designation for the new conference was “Lake Region Conference.” Subsequently came the establishment of the Northeastern, Allegheny, South Atlantic, South Central, Southwest, and Central States Conferences. These conferences were established between 1944 and 1952.¹⁸²

Although the church required almost 30 years to acquire 3,000 Black members, in less than four years following the restructuring it achieved a growth in excess of 3,500

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

¹⁸² *Minutes of the First Meeting of the Delegates of the Black Constituency of the Lake Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists* at Shiloh Church, Chicago, IL (September 26, 1944), 1-4; Reynolds, *We Have Tomorrow*, 303-315.

extra members. The above mentioned figures do not take into consideration Black members in White churches. The *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* says concerning [Black] Regional Conferences:

The plan, though church leaders admit it is not ideal, has been responsible for an evangelistic penetration into the black community that had not been possible under the organization that formerly administered the work among the nation's [Black] membership. The Regional Conferences also have created more opportunities for leadership and other participation by gifted and trained [Black] young people of the church whose selection in the same or similar capacity had not worked out in the years prior to the formation of the Regional Conferences. Another practical result has been the [Black] members of the SDA church have been more readily and more naturally represented in elected offices and on boards and committees outside the Regional Conferences than appears to have been true formerly.¹⁸³

The benefits from [Black] Regional Conferences have been and are incalculable, beyond the wildest dreams of its advocates. In Chapter II, the historical development of Methodism will be examined in the context of race, religion and to a lesser extent gender.

¹⁸³ *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, Commentary Reference Series, 10 vols. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1966), 10:1059.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF METHODISM IN AMERICA, METHODISM AND SLAVERY AND BLACKS IN THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

It is important to have a short overview of how Methodism arrived on the shores of America, and to examine the intense involvement of Blacks at the inception of Methodism. Contemporary biographies and writings provide a distinct view regarding the quality and range of Black participation in initial Methodist functions in America. It is necessary to investigate available proof that at the commencement and rudimentary level of Methodism that a separation occurred between Blacks and Whites which later results in serious problems in the Methodist Church. Some of the pioneers in ministry in Methodism were Harry Hozier, Henry Evans, John Stewart and William Capers who were responsible for creating an outreach to Blacks and Native Americans.

The Methodist position concerning slavery will be scrutinized in the light of the 1784 Christmas General Conference establishing the Methodist Episcopal Church in America and the Methodist General Conference's strong stance against slavery. Special attention will be given to the Methodist Church's retreat from 1785 to 1843 on the slavery issue. The General Conference which convened on May 1, 1844 confronted the slavery issue. An outcome of the General Conference of 1844 was a great split of Methodism into a Northern and Southern Church. The impact of the split on the Black membership of the Methodist Church North and South will be investigated. Inquiry will be made concerning segregation in church membership, the rejection of the appeals to the

Methodist Episcopal Church in the North to ordain Black preachers, and the church's decision to initially decline the appeal to institute Black Annual Conferences will be examined. In 1864, the Northern Methodist Church provided a positive response to the insistent requests on the part of Black members for the ordination of Black preachers as circuit riding elders and the creation of two Black annual conferences. The later development of other Black Annual Conferences along with the organization of new societies (such as the Freedmen Aid Society and the Women's Home Missionary Society) will be reviewed.

Finally, the debate over reunification and the forming of the Methodist Church which occurred from 1935 to 1939 will be discussed. The consequence of the church reunification of 1939 was the establishment of the [Black] Central Jurisdiction (a racially separate Black entity which was formed for all Black annual conferences and missions in the United States in 1939). In 1968, the Central Jurisdiction/Black Annual Conferences were eliminated in the newly created United Methodist Church as a result of the union of the Evangelical United Brethren Church and The Methodist Church.

The first endeavor at advancing Methodism in America occurred in 1735 when John and Charles Wesley journeyed to Georgia from England. John served as a pastor to the colonists, Charles as the governor's secretary, and both brothers helped as missionaries to the Indians. Upon reaching Georgia in 1736, the Wesley's attempted, with few results, to compel the colonists to accept strict Methodism which involved regularly attending communion, coming together for daily prayer, fasting, constant self-

examination, and Bible Study. The rigidity with which the brothers conducted their religious activities early on caused enmity with most of the colonists.¹

Various significant elements involving the Methodist Church occurred in Georgia. The missionary drive to reach Native Americans was a failure. Charles Wesley relinquished his position as the governor's secretary to James Oglethorpe and headed back to England. John had a love interest in Sophia Christiana Hopkey (Miss Sophy), the niece of the chief magistrate. Because Wesley took so long to make up his mind, however, she married another man. The affair became a disaster when John Wesley denied Holy Communion to Mrs. Sophia Williamson on the basis of church rules. A lawsuit was filed against Wesley and for about six months he attempted to have his case decided by the court. Failing to have the matter resolved he returned to England, arriving in London on February 3, 1738.² Thus the first phase of Methodism in America had concluded without visible gain.

Now back in London, the Wesley's met Peter Bohler, a Moravian [the Webster's New World Dictionary definition says "of Moravia, As people, etc., a native or inhabitant of Moravia" or as defined here; "a member of a Protestant sect founded in Savony by disciples from Moravia, of John Huss"];³ who guided them to an assured or simple faith.

¹ William W. Sweet, *Methodism in American History* (New York: Methodist Book Concerns), 31-34; Frederick A. Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism* (Nashville; Abingdon Press, 1974), 20-21.

² "Wesley's Journal entry for August 8, 1737," *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, MA.*, ed. Nehemiah Curnock, 8 vols. (London: Epworth Press, 1938, Vol. I: 377; Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism*, 20-21.

³ *Webster's New World Dictionary*, 2nd ed., 1978, S.V. "Moravian," defined, "of Moravia, as people etc., a native or inhabitant of Moravia," as defined here; "a member of a Protestant sect founded in Savony by disciples from Moravia, of John Huss."

Both brothers were led to a personal experience of faith in Christ attended with an assurance that their sins had been forgiven. The (conversion experience) for Charles occurred on May 21, 1738 and for John took place on May 24, 1738. It can be said that these experiences denoted the commencement of spiritual Methodism.⁴

At this juncture, George Whitefield, who had traveled between England and America thirteen times, preaching wherever he went, was in Bristol, England, preaching outdoors to a large number of coal miners in the area. Whitefield wrote to John Wesley requesting that he come and continue the work at Bristol. John Wesley was greatly impressed by Whitefield's successful outdoor preaching, although it violated the rules of the Church of England (rules against outdoor preaching were instituted to prevent, it was believed, the unleashing of evil forces). The success of Whitefield's outdoor preaching persuaded Wesley of the blessing of outdoor preaching. Wesley preached his first outdoor sermon on April 2, 1739 in Bristol. This was a turning point in the saga of Methodism, not only due to Wesley's casting aside the church's prohibition, but, more significantly, Wesley discovered a method of touching numbers of people not otherwise reached by the church.⁵

Wesley, however, engaged in more than simply preaching. He established his converts into small groups, or societies. The Wesleyan aspect developed for the most part, between 1738 and 1744 with the enactment of the primary characteristics of the United Societies of the People Called Methodist: bands, classes, societies, love feasts,

⁴ Sweet, *Methodism in American History*, 34-36; Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism*, 26-27.

⁵ Sweet, 39-40; Norwood, 28.

watch nights, and the Conference. The Wesleyan Movement expanded to urban areas, especially those areas impacted by the Industrial Revolution.⁶

How can one describe the period that John Wesley and Charles Wesley arrived on the scene until their deaths in the latter half of the eighteenth century in England? It was a time in England when trade and commerce flourished. It was also the period when England's criminal law was strengthened in the interest of the propertied class.

Thousands died in prison, not because they were guilty of any serious crime, but because they could not afford to bribe their way to freedom after being found not guilty.

Education for the poor was non-existent. Apart from what a child learned in his own home, the apprenticeship system provided whatever training was available. Education for women of the middle and upper classes was inadequate. They were taught to read, write and sew from their mothers while waiting for their fathers to obtain a husband for them. A boy, if wealthy, would have a resident tutor. If he was an upper class boy, a neighboring parson would perform the duties of a tutor. The squire's children, along with the wealthier tenant farmers, shopkeepers and merchants children, would attend a local grammar school.⁷ In 1705, during the heart of this period, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel was established which later was the sponsoring group that sent Wesley as a missionary, to Georgia. During this time, Wesley brought religious revival to England

⁶ Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism*, 29.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 20-21.

and while Whitefield brought it to America. Wesley's revival in England lifted common people from defeatism with his statement that every man was a son of God.⁸

Wesley, however, did more than proclaim the word. He instituted a tradition by organizing his converts into small groups or societies. The societies were comprised of adherents who assembled together consistently for prayer, Bible study, and a strengthening of their spiritual experience. Nevertheless, neither the Wesley's nor the followers, who were members of the societies, ever regarded the society as a replacement for the church where they received Communion, were married, were baptized, were buried and where they attended Sunday services.⁹

These societies were split up into classes with a leader who consistently questioned the members about their spiritual health. Occasionally these classes were separated into bands of no more than three or four individuals. In addition, these societies and classes were restricted groups, demanding a ticket authorized by a Methodist leader for entrance. Yet, at the same time, with Wesley's support, the societies also conducted preaching activities for the overall populace with the expectation of acquiring new members.¹⁰

The rise of Methodism, therefore, was seen in the organization of a society of Wesley believers in Bristol and later in London. In Bristol, it became essential to furnish a room for the two classes of societies that had been established in that area. In 1742, Wesley instituted the itinerary, a group of preachers travelling from place to place. It was

⁸ Arnold Nash, *Methodism: The England to which John Wesley Came*, ed. William K. Anderson, (Chicago: the Methodist Publishing House, 1947), 14-18.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 33, 34.

¹⁰ William R. Cannon, *Methodism: Accomplishments to Wesley's Death*, 33-34.

at this point that Wesley made his first evangelist itinerary which resulted in New Castle - on-Tyne being connected to London and Bristol as pivotal places of supervision.¹¹

Wesley designated special itinerary for his more knowledgeable preachers, referring to them as assistants. It was the assistant's responsibility to organize the task of the total circuit (district) and to monitor the work of the preachers who operated subject to their direction. The assistants were the forerunners of what is now known as the district superintendents. It was Wesley who determined the assignment of the district superintendents to the particular circuits or districts about every four or six months and instructed them regarding the overall outline of their duties at appointed intervals. Wesley exerted, to so great a degree, a strict vigilance concerning the district superintendents, he was acknowledged as the "superintendents', superintendent."¹²

The first annual conference occurred on June 25, 1744. The most unique aspect of the establishment of Methodism resulted from that assembly. Initially, it was little more than a consulting or recommending board comprised of six clergy men of the Church of England, including John and Charles Wesley and four lay preachers. From that time on though, discussions focused on doctrine, discipline, and general policy with John Wesley having the conclusive word. Prior to the death of John Wesley, the appropriate apparatus was instituted to advance the Kingdom of God in England. A never existing denomination appeared on the scene in everything but an official title.¹³

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

Historical Overview

Two significant European cultural movements occurred in America during the 1720-1760's; the Enlightenment and Pietism. The Enlightenment stressed the impact of human reason to understand the world. Enlightenment particularly attracted the urban artisans, well-educated seaport merchants, and the planter class. Pietism, on the other hand, was an evangelical Christian movement that emphasized that a person could have a mystical union with God based upon pious behavior. Pietism appealed to the emotions rather than the mind.

Pietism also appealed to more people, mainly farmers and urban laborers. The Pietism movement began in Germany about 1700. In the 1720's, German immigrants took Pietism to America, contemporaneously, an American-originated Pietistic movement occurred in Puritan New England. The first Puritan settlers were composed of very pious Christians, but their spiritual fire had waned. In the 1730's, Jonathan Edwards' rekindled that fire in a revival. It was George Whitefield who transformed the local revivals of Edwards' and others into the ["First"] Great Awakening in 1739. Whitefield brought –as John Wesley's follower -his revival message to America.¹⁴

What was America like during the period of development in the mid 1730's to the 1750's? At this time, America was influenced by various religious denominations from Congregationalists, Angelicans, Baptists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Quakers and many other groups including the Dutch and German Reform. These denominations and groups

¹⁴ James A. Henretta, David Brody and Lynn Dumenil, *America's History, Volume One: to 1877*, 6th edition (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007), 116, 118, 120.

traced their beginnings to Europe, given that just about everything else commenced in Europe during this period. At the same time, several spiritual revivals, growing into an overall religious devotion which has been termed the [First] “Great Awakening,” erupted as a result, and American religion was forever changed. The “Awakening” caused pressures that increased strife and divisions both religious and secular. The [First] Great Awakening, perhaps, did not sow the seeds of the American Revolution; however, it cultivated the soil thus making it suitable for something different to be sown.¹⁵

The Great War for the Empire, or the Seven Years’ War as it was called in Europe, or in the colonies the French and Indian War, ended in 1763 with the Treaty of Paris. Great Britain’s victory resulted in expulsion of the French from Canada and the territory west of the Appalachian Mountains, and the Spanish from Florida. The Pontiac Native American rebellion concluded in the defeat of various British units and a peace settlement; in return the Grenville Proclamation Line of 1763 which prevented White occupation of territory west of the Appalachians was established. By 1763, the British Empire had greatly expanded; however, the British taxpayer was paying five times as much in taxes as the American colonists.¹⁶

To pay for the almost double national debt the British political leadership commenced a plan of Imperial reforms and taxation. Included in this reform and taxation was the Currency Act of 1764, the Sugar Act of 1764, the Stamp Act of 1765, the repeal of the Stamp Act of 1765, the Declaratory Act of 1766, and the Quartering Act of 1765.

¹⁵ Robert A. Divine et al., *America Past and Present*, 8th ed. (New York: Pearson Education, Inc., 2007), 110-113.

¹⁶ Henretta, Brody and Dumenil, *America’s History*, 125-126, 140.

The Townshead Act of 1767, the repeal of the Townshead Act in 1770, the Tea Act of 1773, the Coercive Acts of 1774 and the Quebec Act of 1774. These acts led to colonial mob riots which concluded in 1770 with what is known as the “Boston Massacre.” Patriot writers expressed the notion of opposition from John Dickerson “Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania” in 1768, and Samuel Adams of the Sons of Liberty, who convinced a Boston town meeting to form a committee of correspondence in 1772 in Massachusetts. Virginia, Connecticut, New Hampshire and South Carolina communicated with colonists in various colonies and finally in 1776, Thomas Paine’s, *Common Sense*, stated that American independence was “natural” and simply “common sense,” appeared. British and American leaders probed for compromise between the demands of parliamentary dominion and demands of colonial self-government.¹⁷

It is not possible to comprehend the Patriot opposition movement unless one comprehends political advances during the colonial period. After 1689, the tradition of local self-rule and representative assemblies helped to ignite the drive for political autonomy from England. The local and state-based institutions began during the colonial era in town meetings and assemblies, assumed a different significance by the time of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, the Articles of Confederation of 1777, state constitutions that made British subordinates into American citizens through the first national constitution, the Articles of Confederation which was ratified in 1781.¹⁸

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 140-150, 152-154, 163-164, 166.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 166, 200.

It is the American experiment that inexorably transformed religious institutions and values. Many migrants exited Europe due to the strife between competing religions. In America, they desired to exercise their religion without any hindrances. The migration of Anglicans to Virginia, Catholics to Maryland, Puritans to New England, and Quakers to Pennsylvania and West New Jersey suggested religious diversity. In addition, the migration between 1720-1760, of tens of thousands of Scot-Irish Presbyterians, German Lutherans and various other European Protestants, along with the [First] Great Awakening expanded the diversity of religious orientation among peoples of European heritage. It was in this favorable environment that the message of Methodism took root. In the soil of religious liberty, pluralism, and tolerance the American Methodist religious experiment flowered.¹⁹

By 1730, the number of African slaves imported into the southern colonies had soared. The increase in the importation of Black slaves was due in large measure to the fear from Bacon's Rebellion (Nathaniel Bacon led a rebellion of poor farmers, in the Massachusetts Bay Colony due to unhappiness over the policy not to confiscate Native American land in the territory west of the Appalachian Mountains) in which Planters hope to avoid a class struggle among Whites. Slavery also resulted from racial animus and a reduction in the accessibility of White indentured servants. The French and Indian War resulted in making economic situations better which eliminated the indentured servant trade and was the impetus for a new importation of African slaves in the North American colonies. Looking at the colonies as a whole, there was an astonishing increase

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 66.

in population from 400,000 in 1700 to about 2 million by 1765. The growth was the result of natural birth, increased immigration, and the forced transport of large numbers of slaves from Africa.²⁰

Methodism, Slavery and Blacks in the Methodist Episcopal Church

At the time that Methodism arrived in America, Black slavery had already existed as part of America's political, social, and economic fabric. Methodism originated in America with a powerful abolition of slavery message, which was emphasized by John Wesley for the remainder of his life. In 1743, when Wesley wrote the General Rules guiding the Societies, he included a rule that prohibited "buying or selling the bodies and souls of men, women and children with the intention to enslave them."²¹

Wesley, in 1772, penned his famous tract, "Thoughts upon Slavery," which borrowed extensively from Anthony Benezet's tract of an account of Black life in Guinea where efforts were made to expose as null and void the rationale that endeavored to sanction the slave trade and slavery. Wesley indicated that Africans had an elevated civilization that, in a number of respects, was superior to that of Whites. As Wesley's life was coming to a close, he wrote William Wilberforce a letter urging the British reformer to maintain the battle against the slave trade and slavery, specifically American

²⁰ Clayborne Carson, Emma J. Lapansky-Werner, Gary B. Nash, *African American Lives: The Struggle for Freedom* (New York: Pearson Education, Inc., 2005), 76-77.

²¹ John Wesley, "The Nature, Design, and General Rules of the United Societies (1743)" in *The Works of Rev. John Wesley*, M.A., ed, John Emory, 8 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan., 1958-1959), 8: 269-271.

Black slavery which he concluded was “the vilest that ever saw the sun,” until it is was eradicated.²²

What explains the intense interest of Blacks in Methodism can also be traced to Wesley. In John Wesley’s journal, he recorded that he baptized his first two converts of African heritage on November 28, 1758; these were individuals brought into the Methodist movement in England. Methodism commenced in America in the 1760’s primarily through its Irish converts, among them were Irish Methodist preacher Robert Strawbridge, along with Barbara Heck and Phillip Embury and at the same time Black people were involved. In Maryland in 1764, Strawbridge established the first American Methodist Society at Sam Creek, with a Black slave woman, Anne of the Sweltzer, a founding member of the society. Then Barbara Heck urged her cousin Phillip Embury to begin a preaching service and a slave woman, Bettye of the Heck household, was a part of five individuals assembled when the John Street Society was formed in 1766 in New York. From this gathering they established a class with Embury as the leader. There were other African slaves on the list of contributors to the building fund of the first Methodist meeting house in New York. Thus, Blacks were a part of Methodism at its inception.²³

Blacks participated in the societies in Maryland and New York, Philadelphia, and Long Island as well as wherever Methodists were established. For instance, in 1789, the

²²John Wesley, “Thoughts Upon Slavery, in *The Anti-Slavery Struggle and Triumph in the Methodist Episcopal Church*, ed., Lucius E. Matlock (New York: Phillip and Hunt, 1881), 40; John Wesley, *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley*, M.A , ed., John Telfach, 8 vols. (London, The Epworth Press, 1931, vol. 8:265.

²³ Richard Cameron, *Methodism and Society in Historical Perspective* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1961), 85-88.

John Street Church had 290 White members and 70 African American members. The St. George's Church in Philadelphia indicated it had 270 White members and 17 Black members. The Calvert congregation had 505 White members and 342 Blacks. About fourteen years following the establishment of the Methodist Society and then the Methodist Episcopal Church, there were 1,890 Blacks in the Methodist Church.²⁴ Blacks appeared to be accepted into Methodism irrespective of race or slave status.

Church Historian Sydney Ahlstrom points that it is interesting to note that 1784 and later 1844 became decisive years for Methodism in America. In 1784 John Wesley performed the 'Deed of Declaration' that vested the 359 Methodist chapels into a self-renewing Annual Conference in America of one hundred preachers. A few days later, Wesley, along with Thomas Coke and James Creighton, [both Anglican priests] ordained Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey, [both itinerant preachers]; and also thereafter with the aid of other ordained ministers, ordained Coke to be a superintendent in the United States. The three representatives commenced sailing to America in September, 1784 and arrived here in November of that same year. It was the following month at Baltimore that the three called into session the Christmas Conference to establish and organize the Methodist Church in America. American Methodism, Ahlstrom asserts, "through the next century...would become the chief engine of Evangelical Arminianism in this country."²⁵ Arminianism was a term used to designate almost any form of reform

²⁴ Wade C. Barclay, *History of Methodist Missions*, 4 vols. (New York: Board of Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Church, 1949), 1:268.

²⁵ Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 2 Vols. (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1972), 1:450-451.

theology that modifies the traditional doctrines of total depravity, of limited atonement, or unconditional election and accentuated man's role in salvation.

Ahlstrom made the case that “what made Methodism so dynamic an element in American Protestantism...was the remarkable institutions by which the message was spread and enforced.”²⁶ In America, Ahlstrom indicated the superintendents (or bishops as they were designated) exercised more real power in comparison with similar Protestant authorities. Upon election, the bishop would decide which circuits or in local churches as they believed necessary. The bishop also assigned the presiding elder who directed the various districts into which the circuits were located. At the bottom of the totem pole were the class meetings where the local units of Methodists came together weekly to support each other by testimony, admonition, prayer, and joint study, which provided assurance that church membership was not merely an abstract association.²⁷

Ahlstrom has suggested that in America as perhaps no place else in Christianity individuals had the occasion of implementing various religious emphases, especially at the time of evangelical revivalism. He pointed out in a revivalist context:

1. Perfectionism, the doctrine that “perfect sanctification” or complete holiness and the “second blessing” were attainable or even necessary to the salvation of the converted Christian—was the dominant emphasis in Methodism. Ahlstrom concludes that “John Wesley [was] unquestionably the greatest modern Protestant preacher of Christian perfection. The church he founded was its dynamic bearer, and the first half of the

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 452.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 452-453.

nineteenth century was American Methodism's greatest hour...Methodism had become by the dawn of the twentieth century the largest Protestant denomination in America."²⁸

Not only did John Wesley oppose slavery but Methodists resisted slavery in the General Conferences conducted in 1780 and 1784. At the Baltimore Conference of 1780, slavery was denounced and the Methodist laity counseled to free their slaves. The apex of Methodism constituted resistance to slavery which occurred at the celebrated Christmas Conference of 1784; among those present were Blacks 'Harry Hosier and Richard Allen' who established the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1816. It was at this General Conference that the societies were instituted into the Methodist Episcopal Church; also Francis Asbury [an ordained deacon] was ordained as an elder and dedicated as a superintendent to function with Thomas Coke in overseeing the work in America. The General Conference of 1784 voted the subsequent rules:

1. To expel all slave holding members of Methodist societies who would not in the twelve months manumit their slaves after they reached a certain age. (Methodist in Virginia 'because of peculiar circumstances' were given two years of grace.).
2. To expel immediately all members who bought or sold slaves, except for the purpose of liberation.²⁹

The rules adopted in 1784 at the Christmas General Conference were opposed by the laity and ministers in the South. Due to the opposition to the voted actions, by June of 1785 about six months following the rule's adoption, Coke and Asbury determined to temporarily halt the actions concerning slavery. Coke and Asbury, however, made it

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 577-578.

²⁹ John H. Graham, *Black United Methodists: Retrospect and Prospect* (New York: Vantage Press, 1979), 14, 16-18; Minutes of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1784, 14-15.

clear they still deeply abhorred slavery and would not cease to seek its destruction by all wise and prudent means. From 1785 forward, the actions adopted denoted a withdrawal concerning the action about slavery. The Methodist Church membership increased from 18,000 in 1785 to 56,664 in 1796, with most of the new members being slave holders. The General Conference of 1796 voted that a member be ejected if he sold a slave, but were free to buy slaves if they would free them after a number of years to be determined by the Quarterly Conference a meeting of the governing body of the local church which comprised all the officials of the local church). The Conference of 1796 said a slave holder could join the Methodist Church if a preacher conversed with him on the issue of slavery.³⁰

Unfortunately, the newly established Methodist Episcopal Church engaged in no procedures to prevent the segregation that gradually unfolded among its members. Segregation of Blacks in worship occurred in the original period when Methodism was composed of primarily preaching services in society; it persisted with the establishment of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The first segregated galleries or “African corners” were introduced in 1787, which became the practice in Methodist Episcopal churches in both the North and South. In the places where segregated or separate worship services were conducted by Black Methodists, they were without exception, governed and directed by Whites.³¹

³⁰ Harry V. Richardson, *Dark Salvation: The Story of Methodism as It Developed Among Blacks in America* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Press, 1976), 54.

³¹ Holland N. McTyeire, *A History of Methodism* (Nashville, Publishing House, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1924), 584; Grant S. Shockley, ed., *Heritage and Hope*, 29.

Historical Overview

In 1787, as in the remainder of the Union, slavery was lawful and in the southern states, slavery was the foundation of both its society and its agricultural yield. The issue of the African slave trade at the Philadelphia Convention demonstrated how dissension concerning slavery was at the origin of the nation. In order to maintain national unity, the delegates to the Philadelphia Convention addressing slavery involved concerns as political instead of moral concerns. A Fugitive Slave Amendment was adopted to ratify southern slave owners permitting slave owners to reclaim runaway slaves who escaped to other states. Even though slaves could not vote and antislavery delegates did not want to count them in apportioning the House of Representatives, Southerners insisted they be counted as whole citizens. The delegates compromised, agreeing to consider separately a slave as three-fifths of a free person for representation and taxation. The Convention delegates withheld from Congress the authority to regulate the slave trade until January 1, 1808. Methodists took a stand, as did their founder, John Wesley, opposing slavery, even before the Philadelphia Convention of 1787. Later on, though, the Methodist compromised on the slavery issue regarding slave owners.³²

Slavery was at the center during the early republic, between the two competing views regarding public policy. Alexander Hamilton, a Federalist, supported a strong national government and a financial infrastructure (such as national debt, tariffs and a national bank) to drive economic prosperity in trade and manufacturing, not the slavery system. Thomas Jefferson, a Democrat-Republican, had an altogether different viewpoint. He desired to maintain the power of state governments. Jefferson pictured a

³² Henretta, Brody and Dumenil, *America's History*, 195-197.

nation that was made wealthier due to agriculture based on the slavery system instead of manufacturing. The westward expansion advocated by Jefferson and his party, transformed various elements of the American existence. Hundreds of thousands of yeomen farmers, southern planters and enslaved Blacks headed west. This caused new strife with Native Americans and altered the agrarian economy by strikingly expanding the market value of agricultural products. The westward movement molded American relations with other nations; the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, the War of 1812, the slavery issue, and as well as many of the treaties negotiated were a reaction, in measure, to America's push westward.³³

Church Historian, John H. Wigger, *Taking Heaven by Storm* stated:

Between 1770 and 1820, American Methodists achieved a virtual miracle of growth, rising from fewer than 1,000 members to more than 250,000...In 1775, Methodists constituted only 2 percent of total membership in America. By 1850, their share had increased to more than 34 percent....Throughout the early national period, Methodism appealed to men and women of ambition – to those who were beginning on society's margin, but who were determined to do better for themselves and their families....It did so by encouraging individual initiative, self-government, optimism, and even geographic mobility—all of which gave American Methodism a decidedly modern cast.³⁴

Wigger then made this profound observation regarding Methodists when he indicated:

This ready willingness and ability to thoroughly assimilate into certain aspects of the culture of the early republic is also perhaps what most clearly distinguished the Methodists from other sectarian groups, including to some extent the Baptist. No other sectarian group of the early republic matched the Methodists' national focus or their overriding commitment to expansion...the

³³ *Ibid.*, 234.

³⁴ John H. Wigger, *Taking Heaven by Storm: Methodism and the Rise of Popular Christianity in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 3, 12.

Methodist circuit system was far better suited to handle the rapid geographic expansion of the early republic when compared to Baptist congregationalism...This partly explains why the Methodist growth exceeded that of the Baptists in post-revolutionary years and why the Baptists had closed the gap by mid-century....Put simply, American Methodism was the largest, most geographically diverse movement of middling and artisan men and women in the early republic.³⁵

The ability of American Methodism to assimilate into American culture is one of the unique features of the Methodist Church and is why it later became America's church more than any other denomination. In this connection Wigger made this salient point concerning Methodism:

The dynamism of Wesley's doctrines, along with his stress on individual responsibility and opportunity found a ready reception throughout post-revolutionary America. Methodism offered ordinary Americans the opportunity to seize control of their own spiritual destiny in much the same way that many were striving to determine their social and economic destinies.

Church Historian, Sydney Ahlstrom indicated "that the Methodist message was a democratic theology or a frontier faith."³⁶

The Pioneers in Ministry to Black Methodists

Harry Hosier

In Methodism as in Christianity, the tremendous increase in membership resulted in large numbers of Black converts contributing in its extraordinary dissemination. One of the earliest Black preachers and evangelists in the newly formed states of the United States was Harry Hosier or Hoosier, Hoshur, Hossier or widely known as "Black Harry."

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 12-13, 6.

³⁶ Wigger, *Taking Heaven by Storm: Methodism and the Rise of Popular Christianity in America*, 17; Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 2 vols. (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday and Company, 1972), 1:438-439.

Harry Hosier was born a slave in North Carolina about 1750. It has been stated he was converted through the preaching of Bishop Francis Asbury in 1775 or 1776.³⁷

Although Harry Hosier could neither read nor write, he became a circuit-riding preacher with a fame that exceeded that of Asbury and White preachers of this period.

Church historian Warren Thomas Smith utilized this statement from W.P. Harrison in regards to Hosier's physical appearance:

Harry was small in stature, coal Black and with eyes of remarkable brilliance and intelligence. He had a quick mind, a most retentive mind and such an eloquent flow of words, which he could soon put into almost faultless English, that he was pronounced by many "The greatest orator in America".³⁸

Another Church Historian, G.A. Raybald wrote concerning Harry Hosier in 1849:

Harry could remember passages of Scripture and quote them accurately; and hymns also, which he had heard read, he could repeat or sing. He was never at a loss in preaching, but he was acceptable wherever he went and few White preachers could equal him, in his way.

"In his way," implies that Harry Hosier was foremost a forerunner and homiletically gifted preacher in the outstanding tradition of Black preachers.³⁹

Dr. Benjamin Rush, famous Philadelphia physician, member of the Continental Congress, signer of the Declaration of Independence, abolitionist, heard Hosier and stated: "Making allowances for his illiteracy, he was the greatest orator in America." Dr. Thomas Coke had the good fortune of having Hosier as a traveling guide on his first preaching tour through Delaware, Maryland and Virginia; a distance of approximately

³⁷ Warren Thomas Smith, *Harry Hosier: Circuit Rider* (Nashville, TN: The Upper Room, 1981), 15, 17-18, 21.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 27, 25.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 24.

800 to 1,000 miles. Coke wrote in his journal that “He [Asbury] has given me his Black, Harry by name, and borrowed an excellent horse from me.”⁴⁰

Coke recorded in his journal his evaluation of Hosier after hearing him preach. Evidently Hosier had conquered his heart. Bishop Coke’s evaluation of Harry Hosier’s ability to preach was this: “I really believe that he is one of the best preachers in the world – there is such an amazing power as attends his word though he cannot read, and he is one of the humblest creatures I ever saw.”⁴¹

In Wilmington, Delaware, people came to hear Bishop Asbury, but at that event, the meeting facility, the old Asbury chapel was insufficient to accommodate the crowd. So many individuals gathered to hear the bishop from the outside. Two individuals before that departed the place, complimenting the speaker by indicating: “If all Methodist preachers could preach like the bishop we should like to be constant hearers.” Then someone present commented, “That was not the bishop, but the bishop’s servant.” In astonishment, the listener concluded: “If such be the servant, what must the master be?”⁴² The fact was that “Black Harry” was a more popular speaker than Asbury or just about anyone else in that day.

At different times Harry Hosier was the driver or traveling companion for Asbury, Coke, Whatcoat, Garrettson and Jessie Lee. He exceeded them all on popularity as a preacher. Asbury mentioned Hosier many times in his journal. Freeborn Garrettson and

⁴⁰ Abel Stevens, *History of the Methodist Church*, 4 vols, (New York: Carlton and Porter, 1866), 2:171, 174, 176.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 2:177.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 2: 175.

Thomas Coke mentioned them several times in their writings. Hosier, it is claimed, was the first Methodist preacher, White or Black, to be mentioned in a New York newspaper, the New York Packet. Whatcoat's, in 1787, reported an impressive gain in membership of 847 Blacks, much of the credit going to Harry Hosier. Black Methodists Harry Hosier and Richard Allen were at the Christmas Conference in Baltimore, at the Lovely Lane Chapel from December 24, 1784 to January 2, 1785 were. It was at this conference the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized.⁴³

Finally, it was stated that near to the close of his life, Harry became addicted to drink. His colleagues believed he “fell from grace.” Abel Stevens, the Methodist historian observed:

Though he withstood for years the temptations of extraordinary popularity, he fell, nevertheless, by the indulgent of hospitalities which were lavished upon him. He became temporarily the victim of wine, but had moral strength enough to recover himself...God restored him to the joys of his salvation. Thence forth he continued faithful. He resumed his public labors, and about the [1806] died in Philadelphia, making a good end and was borne to the grave by a great procession of both White and Black admirers who buried him as a hero, once overcome, but finally victorious.⁴⁴

Hosier earned a hero's burial. For an illiterate slave to rise to the top of the preaching profession and to be acknowledged by his superiors as greater than they is remarkable. Hosier's legacy is that of striving to be both Black and a Methodist.

⁴³ Smith, *Harry Hosier: Circuit Rider*, 42, 44, 36, 22, 28, 38, 30.

⁴⁴ Stevens, *History of the Methodist Church*, 2:175.

Henry Evans

The great Black preacher and evangelist Henry Evans had both the talent of preaching but was also talented in church organization. In this respect, Henry Evans has deserved unique recognition. Unlike Harry Hosier, Henry Evans was a free-born Black man, born in Virginia and a shoemaker by trade. As a young person, Evans was converted to Methodism and he became an interment local preacher. He established the Fourth Street Church in Wilmington, Delaware.⁴⁵

Immediately afterward, he moved south to Charleston, South Carolina, however, along the way to Charleston, Henry Evans made a stopover in Fayetteville, North Carolina. In Fayetteville, he attended the worship services at Duggs Chapel and introduced himself as a local Methodist minister. Upon the request of various White residents he preached to their slaves. It is William Capers that provided insight on Evans in his autobiography. Evans commenced to preach to the Negroes with great effect. Early on his preaching was viewed as dangerous to the status quo and the town council prohibited Evans from preaching in Fayetteville. Evans could not convince the town council to allow him to preach in Fayetteville so he removed and retreated to the sand hills on the outskirts of the city boundaries; holding meetings in the woods, with the people following him. He was continually “changing his appointment from place to place.” Now he was breaking no law and the council prohibition was effectively avoided, but not the criminal elements. As resistance increased, he persisted by preaching in

⁴⁵ John H. Graham, *Black United Methodists: Retrospect and Prospect* (New York: Vantage Press, 1979), 3.

various areas. His work had a positive impact on the lives of those attending and word spread about the power of Evans preaching.⁴⁶

Capers stated that Whites determined they should benefit, since there existed a single church facility, but one congregation (Presbyterian) in the town. Now, too, there were some mistresses and masters, who thought the preaching which had proved so beneficial to their servants might be good for them also; and the famous Negro preacher had some Whites as well as Blacks to hear him.⁴⁷

Thus, on the basis of the influence of Evan's preaching, there was "a change in the current of opinion." This result: the law prohibiting Evan's preaching was reversed, permitting him to preach in Fayetteville again. Evan's established a Methodist Church in 1790. Appropriately, it was known as Evan's Chapel in recognition of him. Blacks and Whites both became members of this church, which was socially frowned upon in the South and, later, legally prohibited. The membership of both Blacks and Whites continued to grow. A church was built which was comprised of "a frame of wood, weather bounded only on the outside, without plastering, about fifty feet long by thirty feet wide."⁴⁸

William Capers's stated that Black members were crowded out of the church by the White members. So, the weather bounded boards were removed on each side and "sheds

⁴⁶ William M. Wightman, *Life of William Capers, D.D., Including an Autobiography* (Nashville: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1859), 125; William M. Wightman account is contemporaneous firsthand narrative of the Life of William Capers, it includes Capers' Autobiography which comprises the Life and Times of Henry Evans. Wightman account was recorded three years after Capers death at the District Court of the United States for the Middle District of Tennessee.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 126.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

were added to the house on either side” of the church to contain the Black members.

Church Historian Abel Steven made the case that “Henry Evans was confessedly the father of the Methodist Church, White and Black, in Fayetteville.”⁴⁹

In 1810, Henry Evans presented himself from a little shed that was his dwelling, near the chancel for the last time. Capers portrayed it this way: The little door between his humble shed and the chancel...was opened and the dying man entered for a last farewell to his people. He was almost too feeble to stand at all, but supporting himself by the railing of the chancel, he said: ‘I have come to say my last word to you. It is this: None but Christ’.⁵⁰

John Stewart

John Stewart was born in Powhatan County, Virginia, about 1786, and he was a free born mulatto. At the age of 21, Steward wanted to travel to various areas of the United States and he journeyed toward Marrietta, Ohio. On his trip to Ohio, Stewart was robbed of all his worldly possessions. This encounter in this unfamiliar territory prompted Stewart to contemplate concerning himself and his life’s direction. In spite of the fact his parents were affiliated with the Baptist Church, John was singled out as “a careless sinner.”⁵¹

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 127.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 128-129.

⁵¹ William R. Cannon, “Education, Publication, Benevolent Work, and Missions” in *The History of American Methodism*, ed. Emory Stevens Bucke, 3 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1964), I. 589; Joseph Mitchell, *The Missionary Pioneer, John Stewart, Man of Color* (New York: J. Emory and B. Waugh, 1827), 9. Joseph Mitchell rendition is a contemporaneous firsthand account of the life and times of John Stewart published in May, 1827 approximately four years after his natural death in 1823 living among the Wyandott Indians.

Stewart's travels found him hanging around in public drinking houses. He soon became addicted to drugs and alcohol due in large part to his guilty conscience. Stewart determined to change his life making endless promises and vows, only to continually break them. His despair and hopelessness were heightened by the untimely death of a close friend. Loss of his worldly possessions, near poverty, ignominy, along with the wretchedness of his spiritual condition left him on the edge of hopelessness. This state of hopelessness led Stewart to contemplate suicide on many occasions. One night, Stewart headed to the river to drown himself but was drawn to the singing of hymns in the background. As he got closer, the sound became more impelling. After he reached the area where the singing emanated, Stewart learned that it was a Methodist prayer meeting.⁵²

Denominational prejudice prevented Stewart at first from participating and entering the meeting place. His inquisitiveness got the better of him after a while and he headed into the meeting place, receiving a warm welcome from the Methodists. He was urged by the Methodists "to seek with all his heart the last blessing." He then joined with the people he had once disdained and he "took their people to be his people, and their God to be his God."⁵³

After that, he visited a camp meeting under the direction of Reverend Marcus Lindsey. It was here, after staying all night seeking "the last blessing, "at daybreak, John Stewart was converted. This conversion resulted into systematic, private devotionals in

⁵² Mitchell, *The Missionary Pioneer, John Stewart, Man of Color*, 10-12, 14.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 13-15.

the evening. One evening a voice spoke to him unmistakably saying to him “Thou shalt declare my counsel faithfully.” Stewart, resisted the call to preach, deeming himself unqualified for such a task and headed to Tennessee with his friends. He became gravely ill and was confined to bed. During this time, he had an impulse to travel in a Northwest direction. Stewart, then, made a commitment to God that if he were to recover, he would preach the gospel.⁵⁴

He regained his health and fulfilled his pledge to God. Historian Joseph Mitchell indicates that Stewart embarked on his mission without credentials, directions on the way, money or bread, crossing the Muskingum River for the first time and traveling a northwest course. He confronted various individuals who endeavored in vain, to convince him to turn back. Nevertheless, Stewart encountered some friendly Indians with whom he got acquainted and they presented him to the tribe of the Delaware on the upper Sandusky River. The first adherents to Stewart’s preaching comprised of only two individuals: an old Indian man called Big Tree and a senior citizen Indian woman called Mary.⁵⁵

Stewart faced a language barrier which he sought to overcome. He sought out answers to his dilemma by soliciting the assistance of a subagent (a person representing an agent), William Walker, who guided him to Jonathan Pointer. Jonathan Pointer was a Black man who was snatched and held prisoner by the Wyandotte Tribe as a youth. Pointer was fluent in the Wyandotte language. Stewart went to Pointer’s home, where he

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 14-17.

⁵⁵ James B. Finley, *Sketches of Western Methodism: Biographical, Historical, and Miscellaneous: Illustrative of Pioneer Life*, ed., W.P. Strickland (Cincinnati: Methodist Book, Concern, 1857), 391.

was not well received. Pointer presented Stewart with both his mission and his message, neither of which were embraced.⁵⁶

Pointer was getting ready to leave for a tribal feast and dance. Stewart requested that he be permitted to attend the festivities with Pointer. Hesitantly, Pointer agreed. At the end of the dance, Stewart asked permission to speak to the Wyandotte Tribe. After speaking to the gathering, he inquired if they entertained sentiments of friendship toward him, which they did through extending their hands out to him. The Senior Chief, Two Logs, also known as Bloody Eyes, pointed out they were required to demonstrate friendship to a stranger among them, which Chief Two Logs did by holding out his hand and then other Indian tribesmen followed. Stewart declared he would preach at Pointer's house and extended an invitation for all to attend.⁵⁷

By November, 1816, Stewart's preaching brought about a positive outcome. Chief Big Tree was the first Wyandotte convert. Afterwards, several other chiefs joined the church, among them were Between the Logs and Monocue who became powerful local preachers (local preacher is the first step on takes toward entering full-time ministry in the United Methodist Church).⁵⁸

John Stewart enjoyed a measure of success, but held no license or credentials. From various quarters and sources there were a number of people who opposed the Stewart Ministry. Resistance to his ministry arose from some White traders in the

⁵⁶ Mitchell, *The Missionary Pioneer, John Stewart, Man of Color*, 21-22.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Mitchell, *The Missionary Pioneer, John Stewart, Man of Color*, 22; Steven, *History of the Methodism Church*, 2:437; Nolan B. Harmon, *Understanding the United Methodist Church*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974), 1-12.

Wyandotte territory. Allegations were made against Stewart of being an imposter and a runaway slave. Stewart went to Walker, the subagent who urged him to continue to preach the gospel. The Roman Catholic Church made an allegation against Stewart for preaching a teaching different from the Catholic Church. A trial was conducted with Walker as the judge. He inspected and scrutinized Stewart's Bible and hymnal and also the Catholic Bible. The ruling of (Judge) Walker was that Stewart's Bible was written in English and the Catholic version in Latin. Furthermore, he ruled that Stewart's hymnal held songs from topics in the Bible. Consequently, he ruled that Stewart's bible and hymnal were authentic.⁵⁹

The final opposition concerned Stewart not having a license. Again, William Walker was requested adjudicate the matter. Walker confronted the issue by inquiring whether or not anyone was aware of Stewart having executed a marriage ceremony or baptism. The response of Stewart's accusers was they weren't aware of any such executions. At that point, Walker decided Stewart was not in breach of any law. Walker made the case that no legitimate reason could be raised in opposition of Stewart's attempt to convince sinners to follow God. Then Walker stated, "Any man has a right to talk about religion and try to get others to embrace it."⁶⁰

In March, 1819, about a month prior to the establishment by the New York Preachers' Meeting of a general missionary in Bowery Church April 15, 1819, society , the first missionary and bible society in the Methodist Episcopal Church in America

⁵⁹ Mitchell, *The Missionary Pioneer, John Stewart, Man of Color*, 27-28.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 28-29.

John Stewart was finally conferred a local preacher license. Stewart was present at the Quarterly Conference the meeting of the local church that determines what the pastor's salary should be, amounts of funds the local church should retain for general church work, and how business of the local church is to be directed (the name changed in 1968 to Charge Conference of the Mad River Circuit in Urbana, Ohio). At the conference, Moses Crane, (the presiding elder or more recently termed district superintendent who oversees the churches within a geographic area or district) of the Miami District bestowed license on Stewart.⁶¹

Enfeebled by tuberculosis during the late summer and early fall of 1823, Stewart's health started to decline rapidly. On September 13, 1823, he called for his wife to his bedside "and faintly articulated, 'wife be faithful.'" Stewart died at noon on September 17, 1823 at the age of thirty-seven. He was in the seventh year of ministry to the Wyandotte. He was buried in the center of the Indian reservation on the Upper Sandusky.⁶²

Church Historian William Warren Sweet indicated the home missions' endeavors in the Methodist Church resulted from John Stewart and his work led to the creation of a special organization for home missions at the Methodist Episcopal General Conference of 1820:

⁶¹ Halford, E. Luccock and Paul Hutchinson, *The Story of Methodism* (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1926), 306,309; Mitchell, *The Missionary Pioneer, John Stewart, Man of Color*, 75-76; Harmon, *Understanding the United Methodist Church*, 102-103, 116-117.

⁶² Mitchell, *The Missionary Pioneer, John Stewart, Man of Color*, 91-93; William Warren Sweet, *Methodism in American History* (New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1933), 290.

Stimulated by the highly original activity of Black lay preacher John Stewart who worked among the Wyandotte Indians of Ohio, the General Conference gave its blessing to the infant organization on its purpose to spread scriptural holiness by means of a special agency. For the first time, the Methodist Episcopal Church made a distinction between itself, understood totally as a missionary movement (“to spread scriptural”) and a special department whose responsibility was mission.⁶³

The special home mission department in the Methodist Episcopal Church resulted from the work of outreach of Black lay minister John Stewart to the Wyandotte Indians.

A direct result of the Evangelical revivalism that swept across America after the Revolutionary War, in the late 1790s, was an emphasis on missions reaching the unreached. Congregationalists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Baptists, along with the Methodists, were all motivated by this objective. In order to achieve this goal, southern Methodist established the Mission to the Slaves. However, this mission, while obviously and seemingly desirable, was also in a number of ways morally shortsighted. Methodists created in 1819 and officially sanctioned in 1820, a national mission society led by Nathan Bangs.⁶⁴

At the same time that the national mission society was established in the Methodist Church, the first significant regional dispute involving slavery and its expansion occurred in 1819, at the point that the slave holding Missouri territory made application for statehood as a slave state. Congress argued the issue for almost three months. In about March, 1820, lawmakers agreed on a compromise known as the Missouri Compromise.

⁶³ Mitchell, *The Missionary Pioneer, John Stewart, Man of Color*, 91-93; Sweet, *Methodism in American History*, 190.

⁶⁴ Wade C. Barclay, *History of the Methodist Mission*, 2 vols. (New York: Board of Missions and Church Extensions of the Methodist Church, 1923), 164-166.

Under the provision of the Missouri Compromise, Maine would be allowed entrance as a free state, with Missouri's entrance as a slave state. Thus, the regional balance continued between the North and South in the Senate seats. A line was sketched from east and west, lengthwise Missouri's southern boundary, 36° 30' separated the Louisiana Territory into possibly free and slave states. With the Missouri Compromise, the Methodist Episcopal Church entered into a compromise that permitted slaveholders into the ministry if they were unable to emancipate their slaves, as long as they were "conformable to the laws of the state." The General Conference of 1820 removed slavery as a significant article of concern on the conference's agenda.⁶⁵ The Methodist Church compromised on the slavery question as much as the political and social world.

William Capers

In 1824, the South Carolina Conference established a distinct department to handle the spiritual conditions of Blacks. However, it was not until 1829 that major progress occurred when Presiding Elder, William Capers, a sympathetic advocate for the slave, was appointed superintendent of the Mission at the South Carolina Conference. In 1836, Capers was voted editor of the *Southern Christian Advocate*. About 1840, he was appointed Secretary of the southern Department of Missionary Work.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Clayborne Carson, Emma J. Lapansky-Werner, Gary B. Nash, *African American Lives: The Struggle for Freedom* (New York: Pearson Education, Inc., 2005), 165-167; Donald G. Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism: A Chapter on American Morality, 1780-1845* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 48-49, 51.

⁶⁶ William M. Wightman, *Life of William Capers, D.D., Including an Autobiography*, 290-291, 365, 378. [As stated earlier this is a firsthand account and autobiography regarding William Capers and others.]

Church Historian Donald G. Mathews provided a highly descriptive portrait of

Capers:

Capers was a slaveholder of Huguenot descent, who had rejected Blackstone (refers to Sir William Blackstone, an English jurist and author on the law or study of the law), for the Bible, entered the Methodist ministry and became a pastor to Negroes and a missionary to Indians. A dignified, thoughtful and moderate man who served the Church far better than most of his fellow Southerners, he was a lifelong apostle to the Negroes. One of his first churches was in the Negro district of Wilmington, North Carolina; as a minister in Charleston, he had sent out Negro preachers to the slaves despite the illegality of his actions. Later as a prominent pastor, he fought a hard and bitter fight with cynical Whites in his congregation, who wished to degrade and segregate the free Negro members. To him, the slave was a soul to be valued, a human being ultimately equal to his master, even if 'uncontrollable circumstances' effaced that equality in society.⁶⁷

It is obvious Capers being born into the upper class of society that he felt a special call to minister to the slaves and he treated them with respect.

The year of 1829 was significant in the southern part of the Methodist Church. It marked the commencement of a period of a great movement towards the establishment of missions for the plantation slaves. Charles Cotesworth Pinckney petitioned the South Carolina Conference to send special missionaries to his plantation to provide religious instruction and spiritual welfare to his slaves. Other slave owners made the same requests. William Capers had now convinced enough plantation owners of the necessity of his experiment.⁶⁸

However, as the first Superintendent of Missions for the South Carolina Conference, Bishop Emory, who presided over the Georgia and South Carolina

⁶⁷ Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism: A Chapter in American Morality*, 69.

⁶⁸ Wightman, *Life of William Capers, D.D., Including an Autobiography*, 291-292, 294.

Conference in 1834, asked that Capers be assigned the additional responsibility of Superintendent of Missions for the Georgia Conference. The South Carolina “experiment” resulted in Georgia following next and various conferences in the South to accept Capers’ recommendations. The concept of the mission increased. Whether in Texas, or Kentucky, or from Virginia to South Carolina, Capers was able to acquire overall monetary backing for the Mission to the Slaves.⁶⁹

The growth of the Mission decreased the opposition, but it did not vanish. Some slave owners thought that converted slaves would be more problematic to control and that religious instruction would cause slaves to crave a general education. Others indicated that religious meetings would result in slaves losing working time. Various slave holders were aware of the formal position of the Methodist Church, that it “was convinced of the great evil of slavery”, and so felt the missions would ultimately subvert slavery. Therefore, quite a few slave owners disliked the Methodist Church and were suspicious of Methodist missionaries. Confronted with this opposition, it became essential that Methodist missionaries displayed that the Mission was not in resistance to the slave system.⁷⁰

In fact, the same slave holder, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, in August, 1829, in a speech before the Agricultural and Society of South Carolina, stated that religion for the slave could be a substitute for emancipation. Pinckney stated in the address that “Nothing is better calculated to render a man satisfied with his destiny in this world than

⁶⁹ Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism: A Chapter in American Moral*, 69-70; Wightman, *Life of William Capers, D.D., Including an Autobiography*, 348-344., 69-70.

⁷⁰ Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism: A Chapter in American Moral*, 70-71.

a conviction that its hardships and trials are as transitory as its honors and enjoyments.

By improving the slaves' morality, the missions would improve slavery giving the South the advantage in argument over...our northern Brethren." It was reasoning such as Pinckney's, together with the more conservative stance of Southern Methodist that convinced slave owners to allow Methodist missionaries to continue their work among the slaves.⁷¹

Other difficulties hindered Methodist missionaries from performing their ministry. First, they encountered problems contacting the slaves. Second, slaves could only meet at special times. Third, instruction had to be oral and could not be supplemented with readings. Fourth, moral instructions were rendered worthless, especially regarding the responsibilities of marriages and families, since slaves had no legal safeguards against being dissolved. Finally, instruction on love and brotherly benevolence was, not only ironic, but useless in the face of the cruel behavior slaves experienced.⁷²

Donald G. Mathews poignantly conveyed the contradiction confronting the missionaries to the slaves. Mathews wrote, "No number of stars in a minister's "crown" could make it very pleasant to risk health and life in miasmatic swamps for the honor of being called a 'nigger preacher.'" In correspondence to his friend, Wilbur Fisk, Capers stated that, "few men could be a servant of slaves literally –treated as inferior by the proprietors, as hardly equal to the overseers, half-starved sometimes, suffocated with

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 71-72.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 72-75.

smoke, sick with the stench of dirty cabins and as dirty Negroes, sleepless from the stings of...mosquitoes [sic.] and all in the very centre...of the kingdom of disease....”⁷³

Who and what were the ministry of these missionaries to the slaves? According to Mathews:

These missionaries were Southerners, members of annual conferences to whom they answered. Their purpose was not emancipation, but conversion and pastoral care....And being men of strong and untutored emotion they would express their conception of the Mission in sentimental terms, reveling in the look of wonder in the children’s faces, the gratitude of the adults, and the prayers of confidence from a dying grandfather. Theirs was not a pleasant task, as Capers had said. For a pittance, they would cover broad circuits, perhaps tending 23 congregations in three weeks, always straining to explain their message in plain language and short sentences. After the exhaustion of their patience, they might complain of the slaves’ depraved ignorance, blind superstition and extreme stupidity—and turn back once again to do their work.⁷⁴

The pastors who ministered to the slaves had a thankless task, but were willing to faithfully discharge their duties without receiving approbation.

Because the slaves were unable to read the Bible or anything else, it was difficult for the slaves to comprehend the missionaries preaching, for a knowledge of the teachings was essential for understanding the sermons. As a result, the teachings were sketched out in a special catechism which William Capers wrote out in 1833 and published, called “A Catechism for Little Children and for use on the Missions to the Slaves in South Carolina.” The catechism was comprised of a number of questions and

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁷⁴ William Capers to Wilbur Fisk, September 12, 1833 in Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism: A Chapter in American Morality*, 75-76.

answers that slaves memorized and reiterated to the missionaries, due to the fact that it was all by oral instruction.⁷⁵

There was overall acknowledgement involving Southerners that the Mission was beneficial to slaves and masters. Missionaries recommitted that slaves as a result of the Mission, “were more clean and honest, less thieving and adulterous...The gospel which the Methodists preached gave some slaves purpose, hope and love in a purposeless, hopeless, loveless world—such as it had to some Whites.” However, the Mission failed to affect the complex methodical procedure of slavery or of Blacks’ status as a chattel slave. The Mission’s aim was to convert Blacks, not to emancipate them. The catechisms demonstrated that the Mission was neither undermining nor insurrecting. The shortfall of the Mission was it could never question the slave procedure, so it was seriously, morally constrained.⁷⁶ As Mathews has noted: “As a great moral cause, the Mission was a noble effort to give men new life; but it also reinforced an ignoble effort to keep men in bondage.” The Mission showed that the Methodist Church lacked the capacity to develop over the context of that period.⁷⁷

Historical Overview

Originating about 1790, a sequence of religious revivals cultivated and fertilized the depth of American soil with the intrinsic distinguishing features of Protestant Christianity, providing religious meaning to American republicanism. These decades of

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 80.

religious revivals referred to as the “Second Great Awakening,” caused the United States to become a Christian society. The denominations that benefited throughout the revival period were those that proclaimed spiritual religious equality and were administered representatively. The Second Great Awakening revivalist movement, started in the 1790s, was considerably wider than the First Great Awakening. Moreover, the Second Great Awakening altered the denominational composition of American religion. The Methodists and Baptist churches were, on the whole, the most prevalent. The revivals particularly transformed the lives of African Americans and women. Evangelical Christianity also produced unique public parts for women, specifically in the North and put in place an enduring far-reaching movement to reform society.⁷⁸

The revival movement in American religion that changed the lives of some Blacks and women was the catalyst for the movement to reform the rest of the society. All the various reforms movements, temperance, Sunday observance, prison reform, abolitionism, public education, and the women’s rights movement, were based on the religious vigor produced by the Second Great Awakening. The religious optimism of the Second Great Awakening, to the faith, was, not only could individuals own lives be made better, but society’s at large. Also, it was the period when reform in government policy, as Andrew Jackson and his Democratic Party disassembled the political base of the mercantilist system. Jackson demolished Henry Clay’s American System. Then, in the after pains of the breakup of the old Jeffersonian Republican Party as the result of the election of 1824, two new parties emerged; the Democrats and the Whigs. While the new

⁷⁸ Henretta, Brody and Dumenil, *America’s History*, 258-260.

party organizations persisted in repudiation of Native Americans, women and the majority of Blacks in the political process, it recognized universal suffrage for White men. It was also the period of economic transformation during the first half of the nineteenth century, which resulted in an increase of production referred to as the Industrial Revolution and the increase of commerce referred to the Market Revolution, based on the vital components of water and steam.⁷⁹

During the period from 1820 to 1860, there was a swift enlargement of the plantation system from the Upper South to the Mississippi Valley. From the 1803 Louisiana Purchase, onward, in part due to the removal of Native Americans from the southeastern states in the 1830's and annexing Texas and Mexican lands in the 1840's, slavery advanced, increasing the number of slave states from eight in 1800 to fifteen by 1850. This westward expansion resulted in the involuntary transfer or purchase of in excess of one million enslaved Blacks. After 1820, the percentage of White families that owned slaves was not even a third, about a third were yeoman farmers, more than a third were tenant farmers or workers. For Blacks, church and family were the foundational institutions of their communities, offering hope and consolation despite the trial of slavery.⁸⁰

The economic revolution and social reform sharpened sectional divisions. The North built up into an urban manufacturing society established on free labor, while the South stayed a rural agrarian society relying on slavery. In 1844, James K. Polk

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 269, 347, 331, 328, 298.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 388, 366.

campaign on the idea of manifest destiny, the “Re occupation of Oregon and the Re-annexation of Texas – the whole territory of Oregon” or “Fifty-four-forty or fight” was the pronouncement of Polk’s expansionist campaign. Polk resolved to expand territory and slave states, which resulted in the Mexican-American War. The outcome of the war concluded with the United States obtaining extensive territory which aroused the dynamite and deferred the issue of the expansion of slavery.⁸¹

In order to confront this hazardous matter, Henry Clay and Daniel Webster fashioned the Compromise of 1850, resolved the status of the lands in the Far West; California to be a free state, and the settler of Utah and New Mexico to choose for or against slavery or popular sovereignty. The Compromise resulted in anti-slavery Northerners rejecting the Fugitive Slave Act provisions and pro-slavery expansionist Southerners endeavored to extend slavery where it had never been before. The Whig Party collapsed and disappeared, the Republican Party garnered power, the Democrats divided into regional partisans over the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, Bleeding Kansas and also various slavery involved concerns. The Supreme Court’s ruling in 1857, in the *Dred Scott V. Sandford* case, stating Congress could not outlaw slavery in a territory, nor could a state government, slavery, and Black people, slave or free, were not citizens, added fuel to the constitutional fire. John Brown’s October 15, 1859, Harper’s Ferry unsuccessful raid on the Federal Armory and arsenal, further incited sectional tensions. Abraham Lincoln was selected by the national Republican convention as its presidential nominee because his position on slavery was more temperate than his competitors. Lincoln’s stance on slavery was to let it remain in states where it was already present, but

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 420, 398.

be eliminated from the territories. The election of Lincoln brought the issue of slavery and federal power all to a head.⁸²

Methodist Retreat on the Slavery Issue

After 1796, there was a retreat by Methodists on slavery issues. The 1800 General Conference went on record acknowledging the greater authority of the civil government regarding the issue of slavery. Exception was taken to this powerful anti-slavery “Address of the Conference of 1800,” written by the Bishops, which outraged a number of southern participants. This Conference also rejected a proposal to exclude all slave holders from the church and thus reinstated the position of 1784.⁸³

At the General Conference of 1804, rules were passed that made slave selling lawful, due to determined conditions. In addition, three southern states, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia were excluded totally from these diluted regulations concerning the purchase and sale of slaves. Furthermore, this General Conference commanded to exhort their slaves to provide adequate regard to orders of their masters. In the General Conference of 1808, the domestic slave trade rule was permitted to be deleted by the South Carolina Conference from the Discipline. Also, the General Conference allowed annual conferences to establish guidelines with respect to the purchase and sale of slaves.⁸⁴

⁸² *Ibid.*, 420, 407, 414, 415, 417, 419.

⁸³ John N. Norwood, *1844: A Study of Slavery and Ecclesiastical Politics* (Alfred, N.Y.; Alfred Press, 1923), 19, 16; Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC) 1804, I: 62-63.

⁸⁴ Norwood, *1844: A Study of Slavery and Ecclesiastical Politics* (Alfred, N.Y.; Alfred Press, 1923, 19, 16, 20, 21; Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC) (1808), I: 93.

The first General Conference session of 1812, supplemented a regulation denying the local elder position to any slaveholders who could lawfully set their slaves free and did not, but it resulted in no significant alteration of anti-slavery rules of the Methodist Church. The General Conference of 1812 tabled an action to investigate the moral basis of slavery. Then, the General Conference of 1816 selected a nine-member committee to study the slavery issue and establish a response. The committee voted an action that no slave owner be allowed church membership in states where emancipation or manumission was lawful. At the General Conference of 1820, the authority of the annual conferences to enact their own regulations on buying and selling slaves was removed completely. The 1824 General Conference amended the slavery rules indicating that it was the obligation of ministers to strongly instill in their members the imperative of instructing their slaves to read the Scriptures and permit them to be present at church.⁸⁵

In 1828, at the General Conference, a motion was offered by Stephen and Peter Cartwright allowing the Methodist Episcopal Church to discipline slave holders that abused their slaves. The proposed motion stipulated for censure, suspension and possibly dismissal as punishment for subjecting slaves with “inhumanity, either in not supplying them with comfortable and sufficient food or raiment, or in separating husbands and wives or parents and children, by buying or selling slaves on an inhuman traffic of our fellow creatures.” The motion was voted down by the delegates, even though it was provided by two Southerners who had a firsthand knowledge of slavery. They stated it

⁸⁵ Norwood, *1844: A Study of Slavery and Ecclesiastical Politics* (Alfred, N.Y.; Alfred Press, 1923), 18, 19; Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC) (1808), I: 62-63; Journal of the General Conference of the MEC, (1812, 1816, 1820, 1824), I: 110, 167-170, 205, 294.

would be interfering in a matter of no concern of the Methodist Church. The 1832 General Conference did not consider the problem of slavery, thus the issue of slavery was settled for the Methodists. However, the 1836 General Conference took an action strongly censoring ‘modern abolitionism’ to crushingly reject the conduct of the two abolitionist delegates from the New Hampshire Conference who had spoken at an abolitionist meeting in Cincinnati. Samuel Norris and George Storrs were the delegates that Stephen G. Roszel of the Baltimore Conference provided a motion to censure. The delegates were determined to renounce, on the part of the General Conference, any “right, wish, or intention to interfere in the civil and political relation between master and slave as it exists in the slave holding states of this union.” The motion of censure passed, by a vote of 120 to 15.⁸⁶

It would be interesting to note, that in 1836, the House of Representatives voted the so described gag rule. In regards to the rule, which stayed in effect till 1844, anti-slavery petitions were immediately tabled in order to prevent them from being discussed in the House, denying the dynamite matter of slavery from being on the nation’s agenda. Also, being against abolitionism, the Methodist Episcopal General Conference of 1836 did not stand in isolation, the bishops in annual conferences had denied any discussion of slavery too, on their conference agenda. In fact, as Church Historian Donald Mathews pointed out,

In 1836 leading churchmen of all denominations opposed anti-slavery agitation. New England Congregational ministers and representatives of Baptist bodies denied abolitionism...The Roman Catholic clergy joined the Protestants in

⁸⁶ Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism: A Chapter in American Morality, 1780-1845*, 52, 141-142; *Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC)*, (1828), I:37.

opposing Garrisonian (William Garrison, the great abolitionist and women rights advocate) abolitionism as dangerous to the United States and contrary to Christian morality.⁸⁷

So abolitionism confronted a unified ecclesiastical opponent.

The General Conference of 1840, voted an amendment that was to come back to haunt the Methodist Episcopal Church only four years later. In a somewhat cavalier way, a resolution was voted that the simple holding of slaves should not hereafter constitute a bar to the various official positions in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Most were tone-deaf to the widespread implications of this motion, or foresaw that this action could possibly swing open the door for a slave holding or slave owning bishop. Now by this resolution being officially voted it appeared that not just private members but ministers that at all levels could own or have slaves.⁸⁸ What a stark difference with the original position and stance of the Methodist Episcopal Church at its founding in 1784.

From 1840 to 1844 momentous events occurred that altered circumstances when the General Conference of 1844 assembled in New York. In November, 1842, a meeting was held in Albany, New York to discuss leaving the Methodist Episcopal Church. Methodist Abolitionist Orange Scott inquired of several leading individuals whether they were willing to join in forming an anti-slavery, anti-temperance, anti-everything-wrong church organization. A consensus developed at the Albany meeting to leave the Church. A preliminary convention was conducted at Andover, Massachusetts, in February, 1843

⁸⁷ Henretta, Brody, and Dumeril, *America's History*, 355; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism: A Chapter in American Morality, 1780-1845*, 52, 144.

⁸⁸ Norwood, *The Schism in the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1844: A Study of Slavery and Ecclesiastical Politics*, 22; Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC), (1840), II: 167-171.

to authorize the establishment of local Wesleyan Societies while waiting to form a church organization. A special originating conference was summoned to assemble at Utica, New York, May 31, 1843. This General Conference officially formed the Wesleyan Methodist Connection. Apart from Maine, every New England state participated, along with New York, Pennsylvania and Michigan. The Discipline was quite distinct from the Methodist Episcopal Church. It prohibited slave holding, the consumption of intoxicating liquors and furnished lay participation in the conferences, allowing conferences to elect its own president and the assignment of ministers by a committee of six, to work out an agreement with pastors and churches. The Wesleyan Methodist Connection was arranged into six conferences spreading from Maine to Michigan, from the lakes to slavery borders. The church began with a membership of six thousand; however, after eighteen months its membership was fifteen thousand.⁸⁹ It is interesting that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is similar to the Wesleyan Methodist connection in electing its own president and the assignment of a minister by a committee.

The General Conference Confronts Slavery Issue

Between the years 1842 to 1844, the situation had been transformed in the Methodist Episcopal Church with moderate anti-slavery advocates the majority delegates. The North was determined that a mechanism be put in place to prevent additional secessions. As the General Conference began on May 1, 1844 in New York at the Green Street Methodist Episcopal Church, there were 180 delegates present. The gulf between

⁸⁹ Norwood, *The Schism in the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1844: A Study of Slavery and Ecclesiastical Politics*, 49-51; Sweet, *Methodism in American History*, 241-242.

the two sides could be summed up with two matters involving slavery, one situation dealt with a preacher, the other addressed that of a bishop.⁹⁰

On May 7, 1844, Francis A. Harding, a minister in the Baltimore Conference, made an appeal, having been suspended by the Baltimore Annual Conference because he owned slaves, which was held by his wife's title, whereupon he refused to manumit. The debate of this case went on for five days. It was pointed out that the resolution voted by the General Conference of 1840 was beneficial to him, since the motion stated that ownership of slaves was not a hindrance to any official position in the church. The Baltimore Conference contended that Maryland did allow for the manumission of slaves. It was indicated that the punitive regulation was for traveling ministers rather than the local ministers or private members. Following five days of arguments, the General Conference overwhelmingly voted to uphold the decision of the Baltimore Conference by 117 to 56.⁹¹

The great debate over slavery was directly connected with the Report of the Committee of Episcopacy on May 21. It involved a Bishop James O. Andrew, a modest individual, who had never felt comfortable in his lofty office, had, in a roundabout act, become a slaveholder. Bishop Andrew's decision was to resign, thus contemplating alleviating the tension resulting from a prolonged conference fight. Before taking action, Bishop Andrews was determined to place the entire concern in front of the southern

⁹⁰ Norwood, *The Schism in the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1844: A Study of Slavery and Ecclesiastical Politics*, 57-62.

⁹¹ Norwood, *The Schism in the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1844: A Study of Slavery and Ecclesiastical Politics*, 60-61.

delegation, as his intended direction would completely impact them. He set up a meeting seeking their honest viewpoints. The southern delegation advised Bishop Andrew to not submit his resignation to the General Conference. He pledged to them to not resign.⁹² Upon inquiry it was discovered that Bishop Andrew had a mulatto girl willed to him in trust by an old lady from Augusta, Georgia and a young Black boy willed to him from his first wife's estate. The girl would not leave him and the boy was too young to leave and live on his own. Georgia law made emancipation or manumission illegal. Furthermore, the Bishop's second wife owned several family slaves from the estate of her first husband and these slaves she had obtained by a deed of trust.⁹³

Afterwards, the committee on episcopacy submitted the facts to the General Conference. Following their presentation, Griffith and Davis introduced a motion that Bishop Andrew be requested to resign from his office. Subsequently, due to the heated discussion, James B. Finley introduced a softer replacement rather than requesting the Bishop to resign, it asked him to "desist from the exercise of this office so long as this impediment remains." A vigorous discussion ensued, which continued for eleven days and occupied about 100 pages of the formal record of the General Conference session⁹⁴.

The arguments preceding the primary concern, slavery, receded whereas the legal and constitutional aspects took the center-stage. The southern delegation maintained the

⁹² Norwood, *The Schism in the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1844*, 66-68; *Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC)*, (1844), II: 33-34.

⁹³ Norwood, *The Schism in the Methodist Episcopal Church*, (1844), 69.

⁹⁴ Norwood, *The Schism in the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1844: A Study of Slavery and Ecclesiastical Politics*, 69-70, 72-73; *Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC)*, (1844), II: 64-66.

stance that the episcopacy was a co-ordinate part with the General Conference; the General Conference had no authority to declare him ineligible as a bishop. The South indicated that the bishop had not violated any regulation because an action was voted at the General Conference of 1840 legalizing slave holding in all grades of the ministry. The North indicated that a bishop was only an office of the General Conference and was subject to it in all regards. Like, in the later case, the southern delegates believed the literal meaning or interpretation of the law was in line with their position, there was a corresponding connection between the circumstances in the Methodist Church in 1844 and in the United States over the Kansas-Nebraska Act (popular sovereignty) 1854 and the Dred Scott decision of 1857 (which negated the Missouri Compromise). Prior to the Civil War, the expansion of slavery into territory free of it was resisted by Republicans, when the law appeared to be supportive of slavery.⁹⁵

Then on May 30, the bishops recommended no afternoon session meeting so that the bishops might attain a compromise. The arguments were put on hold until the following day when Bishop Waugh presented the bishops proposal to delay the entire issue till 1848. The abolitionists now provided their antithetical views on the postponement proposal to Bishop Hedding, who expressed his remorse for signing the Episcopal (bishops) report. He pledged to retract his support and name from the report. He was permitted to take this action. This was the pivotal place in the General Conference of 1844. The Finley alternative motion now voted on Bishop Andrews'

⁹⁵ Norwood, *The Schism in the Methodist Episcopal Church*, (1844), 75.

passed 111 yeas to 69 nays. By a wide margin, the motion requesting that Bishop Andrew desist from his Episcopal duties while connected with slavery had passed.⁹⁶

Immediately after the Finley alternative was ratified the minority confirmed its intentions of heading into protest. The protest spelled out on June 6 established a suitable account of the southern argument. On June 10th, the North responded to protest and skillfully stressed their case from their perspective. The first Committee of Nine presented an united report June 5 to the General Conference that it discovered no plan that was approvable. A second Committee of Nine was established and on June 7, finished its report which has been designated as the Plan of Separation. The twelve parts of the Plan established an approach to determining a boundary for the two Methodism if separation occurred, permitting minister to decide between the two churches, and a recommendation to the annual conferences to change their limitation to allow an apportioning of the property. The Book Concerns (property value of the church of the true market value is Book Concern) established the regulation for the apportioning and conveying of property and for the combined utilization of occurring copyrights. On June 8, the Plan of Separation was voted 146 yeas to 16 nays by an overwhelming margin. After granting the South its Magna Charta, the General Conference adjourned.⁹⁷

Prior to heading out of New York the Southern delegates met on the General Conference adjournment to decide their course for the future. Following the initial

⁹⁶ Norwood, *The Schism in the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1844*, 78-80; Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC), (1844), II:81-84.

⁹⁷ Norwood, *The Schism in the Methodist Episcopal Church, (1844)*, 83, 85-87; Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC), (1844), II: 86-87, 103, 128.

meeting in New York, the Southern delegates proposed to convene a convention to be held in Louisville, Kentucky for May 1, 1845 to determine the formation of an independent church. On May 15, the Committee on organization issued its report. An official declaration of independents made concerning the authority of the General Conference. The title of the new church was voted 95 to 2 and was known as the: Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The Southern General Conference opened its first Methodist Episcopal Church, South at Petersburg, Virginia, May 1846. The new church made no changes in the old Discipline, except some minor verbal ones. The Discipline needed no changes if properly interpreted, would preserve their rights and ratifies their actions. The denomination that had been born sixty years before in Baltimore had now become two distinct denominations, one South and North, over the matter of slavery and would remain such for about a century.⁹⁸

Historical Overview

Following Lincoln's election in November 1860, secession sentiment traversed the Deep South with first South Carolina on December 20, 1860 at a special state convention voted unanimously to secede from Union. In January of 1861, Mississippi, then a month later, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas had departed from the Union, and declared themselves the Confederate States of America at a meeting in Montgomery, Alabama. The South Carolina fire-eaters (those individuals who advocated succession of southern states and led out in the succession of the above mentioned states) fired on Fort

⁹⁸ Norwood, *The Schism in the Methodist Episcopal Church*, (1844) 90-91, 100-102; Grant S. Shockley, ed. *Heritage and Hope; The African-American Presence in United Methodism* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 37-38.

Sumter on April 12, 1861 and surrender of the fort on April 14. This resulted in Lincoln requesting 75,000 state militiamen to end the insurgency, which caused the secession of the Upper South states and greatly assisted the Confederacy.⁹⁹

Initially, it appeared that the Confederacy might prevail as its generals repelled Union assaults on Richmond and took an offensive posture. But as the war persisted, the basic economic and homogeneous frailties of the Confederacy became obvious. Slaves either escaped or declined to work, yeomen farmers declined to battle for a system that profited rich landowners, and finally the European countries rejected attempts by the Confederacy for acknowledgement as a nation established to maintain slavery.¹⁰⁰

Upon inspecting the North, it is apparent through evidence of why the Union's experienced superiority in manufacturing, economic measures, and armed forces. The military leadership; George McClellan, Ambrose Burnside, Joseph Hooker, George Meade; was either ineffective or less than aggressive in chasing the enervated enemy. However, eventually the innate potency of the Union grew to be apparent. The Union's Congress developed a productive method of conducting monetary and war fiscal policy. Lincoln discovered relentless hard military leaders in Ulysses S. Grant, Philip Sheridan, and William T. Sherman. The Emancipation Proclamation coupled with the now active enlistment of Blacks both slave and freed furnished a plentiful source of fighters resolved to battle for their liberty.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Henretta, Brody, and Dumenil, *America's History*, 424, 416, 427, 454.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 454.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 454, 430, 432, 441; 444-445, 448-450.

Examining the North and South, the influence of the concept of total war (the complete resources of both societies assembled in opposition to other, whether civilian or military); and the obtrusion of conscription and extensive taxes. The growth in labor load of women on farms and the hiring of urban women in jobs as postal employees and nurses; the continual provisions deficiency and excessively elevated prices were all the results of the war. Beyond the reality of the war, were the disastrous deaths that affected almost all families, both in the North and South. Nearly 260,000 Confederate fighters had died in the Civil War and in excess of 360,000 Union fighters perished, with hundreds of thousands permanently disabled on both sides.¹⁰²

While conducting the Civil War, the Republican government of Lincoln transposed the Jacksonian course by passing laws that aided farmers, railroads, and corporations. These policies persisted following the Civil War. Congress and the Federal judiciary by adopting and supporting laws beneficial to banking systems, and various enterprises in the period of the late nineteenth century were vigorously advocating the growth of a strong manufacturing economy.¹⁰³

Reconstruction faced two main chores, renewing the seceding states to the Union and including emancipated slaves into the right of citizenship. In various ways, Reconstruction passed through three phases. What has been designated the presidential phase, Lincoln's vice-president Andrew Johnson, successor issued a one-sided proposal to the South, which provided lenient conditions for admittance into the Union. Due to

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 451, 454.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 454.

Southerners overplaying their hand by voting onerous Black Codes and inviting former Confederates into offices, the enraged Republicans in Congress, supported the Radicals (Republicans who promoted a range of rights and protection for the freedmen) and required the right of citizenship for the freedmen, put the South subject to military control in 1867, and commenced with Radical Reconstruction.¹⁰⁴

The second phase, the Reconstruction Republican administrations of the South endeavored to alter the debilitated financial and social systems at the same time former slaves struggled for economic self-control. The former Confederates started a furious counter-insurgency movement on the basis of White supremacy and redemption, as they called for taking the state government from Republican control by terrorist activities, redemption. Side-tracked by Republicans shameful conduct, the economic Panic of 1873 and the depression of 1873-1877, the Grant government had no resolve to deal with prolonged anti-Black terrorist activities in the South. Reconstruction governments collapsed as the leaders gave in to Redeemers threats and terrorism. In the final phase, Reconstruction was wrapped up with the struggle over the election of 1876. The Republicans determined by the surrender of their leftover southern fortifications of Florida, South Carolina and Louisiana, to return the White House.¹⁰⁵

The lasting effect of Reconstruction was the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment outlawing slavery, the Fourteenth Amendment ratified in 1868 to preserve Black rights as citizens, and the Fifteenth Amendment ratified which forbade states to

¹⁰⁴ Henretta, Brody, Dumenil, *America's History*, 481.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 481-483.

deny citizens the right to vote on the grounds of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. In addition, the ultimate impact on Blacks of the share cropping system couldn't be under estimated in it left them in economic slavery. On this discomfoting note Reconstruction concluded.¹⁰⁶

A Period of Change in the Methodist-Episcopal Church North and South

The General Conference of Methodists in the North Episcopal Church changed its regulation on slavery throughout the war years. The bishops, church publications, and annual conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church provided stalwart backing to the Union position of President Lincoln. The only General Conference during the war period occurred in 1864, when the delegates offered an official statement of approval and encouragement to the president of the Methodist Episcopal Church North. Its large membership was a significant element in arousing support for President Lincoln and the Union. The Methodist Episcopal Church in the North endorsed the war in two areas, the advocacy of the United States Christian Commission and chaplains and the Sanitary Commission. The Methodist Episcopal Church passed through the Civil War unscathed.¹⁰⁷

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South was with the defeated party, the Confederacy. Results of the Civil War were an unmitigated catastrophe for the Methodist Church, South as well as the entire South. In 1860, the membership of the Methodist

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 468, 472-474.

¹⁰⁷ Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism*, 242-244.

Church, South was 454,203 Whites, 171,857 Blacks, and 701 Indians, and in 1866, 419,404 Whites, 78,742 Blacks, and 701 Indians. While the General Conference of 1864, for the Methodist Episcopal Church in the North was held, the Methodist Episcopal Church, and South, General Conference of 1862 was not held. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South provided more chaplains than other denominations. Together with the remainder of the South, the Methodist Episcopal Church South experienced devastation of its property. By 1870, the Methodist Episcopal Church of the North had ten northern annual conferences present in the South, numbering 135,000 members, 47,000 Whites, 88,000 Blacks, being ministered by 630 ministers of whom 370 were Black. The precipitous fall in the Black membership to 20,000 in 1869 resulted in the 1870 Methodist Episcopal Church, South establishing the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church. Therefore, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South became an all-White church.¹⁰⁸

Near the end of the Civil War, there was the establishment of distinct annual conferences for Blacks in the Methodist Episcopal Church. By 1876, societal forces pushing for segregation caused the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the North to commission the forming of segregated conferences in the places where the plurality of either White or Black members wanted them. However, like the Seventh-day Adventists originally the Methodist Episcopal Church of the North, as Hunter Farrish pointed out, had a color-blind position. Farrish states from the New York Christian Advocate of 1866:

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 246, 249, 252.

Our official action should be distinct and outspoken on this subject; the theory of “color-blindness” should be clearly enunciated and at once reduced to practice. Colored ministers should be invited to membership in our Annual Conferences, and introduced into our pulpits. Colored families should be welcomed to our churches, not to sit on separate seats assigned to them as a distinct caste, but in free churches to sit where they please, and in pewed churches, in such pews as they may choose to pay for.¹⁰⁹

Unfortunately, the Methodist Episcopal Church was incapable of sustaining this stance toward segregation in the South. The wish to preserve the White membership in the South caused it to change in position on racial matters resulting in a great deal of discomfort on its part. At the General Conference of 1884, the Methodist Episcopal Church voted “caste prejudice is a sin” but also voted:

We, recognize the propriety of such administration as well hereafter, as heretofore, secure the largest concession to individual preferences on all question involving merely the social relations of its members....Resolved...That the questions of separate or mixed schools we consider one of expediency, which is to be left to the choice and administration of those on the ground and more immediately concerned.¹¹⁰

The above statement was made after that General Conference voted:

That it is the sense of this General Conference that no trustees of churches, schools, colleges, or universities, nor any pastor, principal, president or any other person in authority of church or school property, belonging to or under the control of the Methodist Episcopal Church, should exclude any person or persons from their churches, schools, colleges or universities of good moral character on account of color, race, or previous condition of servitude. So that at the exact General Conference segregation in schools and churches was equally denounced and endorsed.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Hunter D. Farrish, *The Circuit Rider Dismounts: A Social History of Southern Methodism, 1865-1900* (New York: De Capo Press, 1938, 1969), 212-215, 212.

¹¹⁰ L. M. Hagood, *The Colored Man in the Methodist Episcopal Church* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Cranston & Stowe, 1890), 221, 224.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 218.

The Methodist Church position on segregation was both for and against it at the same time.

Segregation shrouded Methodism both North and South, and also the formulation of the principle of segregation as the answer to the issue of race was enunciated by various Methodist officials. Atticus G. Haygood's explanation that it was "race instinct" that segregated [Blacks] in the North, where slavery did not exist, he believed that "this instinct will never rest till it realizes itself in complete separation." Whereas L. M. Hagood argued that it was not "race instinct" that caused men [Black men] to segregate. Hagood indicated "that prejudice on part of Whites was responsible for segregation." By 1890 a "color line" had been outlined in most of the southern conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the North. [Blacks] possessed equal rights educationally but still could not attend "White schools." The term "White" was not written in the Discipline with any discriminatory regulations; however Methodists, North and South, adapted to the segregation practices of American society.¹¹²

The Establishment of Black Annual Conferences

The General Conference of the Methodist Church assembled in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on May 2, 1864. Foremost on its schedule, was the project of evangelizing Black freedmen in the South. Since, the triumph of the Union forces appeared impending, the General Conference planned methods to enter the South by an intrusion of missionaries and teachers. The ultimate objective of this invasion was the establishment of missions and annual conferences for Blacks in the Methodist Episcopal Church. This

¹¹² Hagood, *The Colored Man in the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 199, 215.

approach addressed the issue that had arisen in the Church: what shall we do for the Blacks?¹¹³ Out of concern to address the needs of African Americans White Methodists decided to form predominantly Black Annual Conferences.

The first Black mission conference to be established was the Delaware Conference at Tindley Temple in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on July 29, 1864. The boundary of the new Delaware Conference consisted of the state of Delaware and eastern Maryland and several churches in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The Delaware Conference was constituted of 34 Black churches with 21 Black ministers, 39 local Black preachers, 4,964 Black church members and 841 Sunday school students. The second Black mission conference to be constituted was the Washington Conference. It was established at Sharp Street Church, Baltimore, Maryland on October 27, 1864. The boundary of the Washington Conference included Western Maryland, The District of Columbia, the state of West Virginia and portions of western Pennsylvania and Virginia, west of the Susquehanna River. The Washington Conference was established with 21 Black ministers, 43 local Black preachers, 8,194 Black church members and 19 Black churches.¹¹⁴

In 1864, The Delaware and Washington Mission was established along with various other Black mission conferences in the following years which, included Mississippi, December 25, 1865, South Carolina, April 2, 1866, Tennessee, October 11, 1866, Texas, January 3, 1867, Georgia, October 10, 1867, North Carolina, January 14,

¹¹³ Graham, *Black United Methodist: Retrospect and Prospect*, 33-34.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 35-37.

1868 and other conferences later in the South. In some situations, the states were divided into two conferences. On May 11, 1868, the General Conference, after a ten day debate, voted the “Black mission conferences be granted the...status of Annual Conferences.” The Black Annual Conferences occurred as separate conferences for over a century in the Methodist Church structure.¹¹⁵

The Freedman Aid Society and the Women’s Home Missionary Society

The Freedman Aid Society was the portion of the evangelizing program for former slaves that resulted in the constitution of schools and college for instructing leaders for citizenship in society and leadership in the outreach of the church. The Freedman Aid Society would be situated at the center of the population, where freedmen could work together and where a school would be established. The Freedman Aid Society was established in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1866 to work with the Missionary and Church Extension Societies of the Methodist Episcopal Church. It was incorporated in 1870; officially recognized by the General Conference of 1872. Within the first seventeen months fifty-nine schools were founded in ten states by the Freedman Aid Society in the South. The majority of schools were elementary schools; by 1868 there were three institutions of higher learning founded: Morgan College in Baltimore, Claflin University in Orangeburg, South Carolina, and Clark College in Atlanta, Georgia. Some of the elementary schools became academies and preparatory schools within several years. Some of these institutions ultimately transformed into colleges.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, 37-40.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 37-40.

Also, on June 8, 1880, the Women's Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in Cincinnati, Ohio. Mrs. Rutherford Hayes, wife of the President Rutherford B. Hayes and first lady of the nation, served as first president of the Woman's Home Missionary Society. The General Conference of 1880 supported the efforts to reach out to Black women and girls by women of the Woman's Home Missionary Society. The Freedman's Aid Society and the Woman's Home Missionary Society became involved in the Christian instruction of the freedmen of the South. Then, the Freedman's Aid Society and the Women's Home Missionary Society organized institutions for Blacks in Black, annual conferences. Among those remaining are ; Rust College, Dillard University, Claflin College, Clark College, Bethune Cookman College, Bennett College, Wiley College, Meharry Medical College, Philander Smith College, Morristown Junior College, Paine College and Gammon Theological Seminary.¹¹⁷

Historical Overview

The development of modern industrial society from the period between 1877 and 1892 was based on competitors' ability to furnishing the wealth and products that would energize and broaden the industrial economy. The chief advancement was an effective railroad system that was made available to industries with a comfortable approach to country wide trade. The greatest challenge was discovering sufficient employees for American expanding manufacturing. The South enlisted people from the locality of either race, while the manufacturing sector in the North depended on immigrants from

¹¹⁷ Mason Crum, *The Negro in the Methodist Church* (New York: Division of Education and Cultivation, Board of Missions and Church Extension, The Methodist Church, 1951), 63-67, 80-90.

Europe. Each section of the country relied on unmarried and single females. Race, gender, and ethnicity ended up being prominent parts of the working class in America. It is during this period the labor movement in America was formed. The Knights of Labor founded in 1869 reached its apex in mid-1880. The American Federation of Labor was established in 1886. The AFL approved of the economic system, but also diligently pursued a bigger portion for workers that resulted in resistance from employers. The outgrowth of a well-defined urban American culture was investigated along with the way late nineteenth century cities were constructed. Urban expansion was pushed by manufacturing.¹¹⁸

The poor resided in inner cities and industrial areas, the middle class lived in suburbs, and the wealthy stayed in up-scale areas past the suburbs. In 1885, the first steel-framed building was erected in Chicago, the Home Insurance structure; and in 1887, the electric trolley line was established in Richmond, Virginia. The elements of an unique urban society were distinguished by the nature of the recent arrivals; European immigrants, southern Blacks, and rural town Whites adjusted to the urban surroundings.¹¹⁹

After Reconstruction, the color line resulted in a more regimented system, with segregated accommodations and specific seating on trains, initially voted in the late 1880s, providing the basis for lawful division of races. The imposed laws, 'Jim Crow Laws,' were implemented and concentrated in numerous varieties of public buildings;

¹¹⁸ Henretta, Brody, Dumenil, *American History*, 547-548.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 548.

restaurants, hotels, street cars, and cemeteries. By the 1890s, southern states were a segment of the United States that were legally segregated. In the case of *Plessy versus Ferguson* in 1896, the Supreme Court ruled that segregation was not discriminatory if equal. In Mississippi Blacks were forced to pass a literacy test that was used to reject them the political process.¹²⁰

The period between 1900 and World War I was distinctive and notable for its reform energy, thus the classification, “the Progressive Era”. America was completely focused on industrialization and urban development during this time. There was a familiar style to progressivism; first, the middle-class drive to better the culture; second, a practical perspective and optimism of the culture’s capacity to resolve difficult issues existed; third, muckraking journalism (refers to journalists who showed the seamier part of American culture) were skilled at uncovering difficult issues for national examination. The energy reform was not limited within a particular type but had various aspects which continued to unfold, involving conservation, the railroad industry, the meat packing industry, the drug industry, trade, and banking.¹²¹

Francis Willard, president of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), became the most prominent women’s organization in the nation. Willard moved the WCTU into the Prohibition Party to obtain the support of women’s suffrage by the Prohibition Party. Women reformers, such as Jane Adams and Florence Kelly, along with Black female reformers Sojourner Truth and Ida B. Wells, infused much vigor into

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 568-569.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 638, 631, 629, 632, 635-636.

the suffragist movement. The National American Suffrage movement was re-energized by Carrie Chapman Catt, who assumed leadership in 1915. In 1916, Alice Paul established the National Woman's Party which opposed the state-by-state approach in favor of the constitutional amendment that would provide women the right to vote. The Supreme Court's ruling in *Muller v. Oregon* in 1908, which upheld the Oregon law restricting the work day for women to ten hours, recognized the heavy burden on women's health.¹²²

In regards to racial matters, the overwhelming majority of White progressives were not progressive. One Black leader in 1895, Booker T. Washington, in his Atlanta Compromise speech advocated that Blacks shun a frontal attack on White supremacy. Notwithstanding Washington's conciliatory standing with Whites in public, secretly he fought vigorously against the Jim Crow laws and disfranchisement. Washington's public stance aroused resistance from younger, educated Blacks. Between 1900 and 1910, 200,000 Blacks migrated from the south to the north only to face White hostility in the northern cities. In 1906, W.E. B. Dubois and William Trotter arranged a gathering at Niagara Falls culminating in the Niagara Movement. The Niagara Movement delineated the basis in the battle for Black rights. Two fundamental principles were enunciated: first, fostering of Black pride; and second, an unyielding requirement for total political and racial equality.¹²³

¹²² *Ibid.*, 594-595, 615, 617.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 638.

Despite the racism of the period, small groups of White progressives were stirred to support racial justice for African Americans. One of the most noted of these was Mary White Ovington. Impacted by the bloody race riot in Springfield, Illinois in 1908, Ovington convened a gathering of like-minded White progressives resulting in the establishment of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909. The majority of those connected with the Niagara Movement joined the NAACP. In 1911, the National Urban League was established to assist Black migrants reaching their destination in northern metropolises. In the South, Black women, through the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs working in the churches and schools for the welfare of Blacks were able to by-pass the racial divide and obtain common purpose with southern White women.¹²⁴

The United States passage into World War I in 1917 had many different causes; Germany's breach of American neutrality on the Atlantic Ocean, social and financial connections to the Allied side, and Woodrow Wilson's objective of employing the authority and prestige of the United States to stop the fighting and develop an equitable world order. In order to achieve this aim, it was necessary to organize and activate the home base. One of the difficulties challenging the government was to produce a military force from basically zero. The federal government had the responsibility of increasing agricultural and manufacturing output and enlisting a labor force while also providing materials for the war industry.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 638, 624-626.

¹²⁵ Henretta, Brody, Dumenil, *America's History*, 702.

A number of reformers were able to favorably utilize the exigencies of war to promote their aspirations. The status of labor unions bettered when the National War Labor Board (NWLB) was created in 1918, enhancing the position of working men and women. The NWLB instituted an eight hour day for labor workers, with time and a half for overtime, and equal back pay for women workers, along with a no-strike pledge from labor unions. The NWLB sanctioned the right of workers to form unions and obligated employers to bargain with shop committees. Labor membership increased from two million to three million during the war. World War I produced employment opportunities for racial and ethnic minorities. African Americans were actively sought by northern manufacturing plants, producing the “Great Migration” from southern agriculture to the industrial belt; primarily in the Mid-west. In excess of 400,000 Blacks relocated in St. Louis, Chicago, Detroit, and New York. Blacks experienced discrimination in the North but received the same pay as White factory workers as compared to the low compensation in the southern agriculture. Mexican-Americans left from low paying farm employment for higher paying factory employment in the expanding metropolises of the Southwest. Women were the largest sector to benefit due to the supplies needed for the war. Approximately one million women entered the work place who never worked before. An additional eight million women left low paying employment such as teachers and domestic workers for the higher wage factory jobs.¹²⁶

At the start of the war, the Nation American Suffrage Association (NAWSA), with two million members, decided to back the Wilson Administration. Catt, the President of

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 685.

NASWA indicated that women must demonstrate their patriotism to promote women suffrage. NASWA women across the nation supported food conserving measures to safeguard children and women employees while they actively dispensed emergency assistance vis-à-vis groups like the Red Cross. Furthermore Alice Paul of the Nation Women's Party (NWP) on July 17, 1917 began protesting and picketing the White House. Paul and other women protestors were arrested for blocking traffic and were convicted and given seven months prison sentences. While in prison the women went on a hunger strike and were forced fed by prison officials which caused public astonishment and forced the White House to action. President Woodrow Wilson correctly realized that his objective of making the world safe for democracy had to commence on the home front. In January of 1918, he encouraged the adoption of women suffrage as a "war measure". The women's suffrage amendment, or the 19th amendment, was finally ratified on August 26, 1920.¹²⁷

The heightened emotions of World War I provided political impetus to the prohibition movement. An increase in anti-German excitement and feelings also prompted this response. Due to the fact that the main breweries, Pabst, Busch, and Schlitz were established by German immigrants, most Americans believed it was unpatriotic to consume beer and the prohibition crusade climaxed in December, 1917. Congress voted the Eighteenth Amendment and it was ratified by almost all of the states by 1919. It became operational on January 16, 1920 and was ultimately repealed by the Twenty-first Amendment in 1933. The Prohibition Act however, never garnered

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 688-690.

widespread approval.¹²⁸ As the conflict in Europe concluded, back home race riots, strikes, and police raids resulted in violence occurring in manufacturing plants and in various metropolises.¹²⁹

The First Black Bishops

The push for the selection of Black to Episcopal leadership also commenced in 1868, where it languished, then came up again in 1872. The request was made at the General Conference of 1876, again at the 1880, 1896 and the 1900 General Conference. The General Conference of 1880 voted for the recommendation of electing a “Black bishop” for Black members, “a limited episcopacy,” but nothing occurred. The failure to elect an imminently qualified Black person was especially evident at the General Conference of 1896, when John Wesley Bowen, Sr., the first Black to earn a Ph.D. from Boston University, a former pastor, and at that point, professor of Historical Theology at Gammon Theological Seminary, was rejected.¹³⁰

It was not until the 1920 General Conference that a decision was made to elect a Black bishop to Black Episcopal areas such as Black annual conferences. A Mississippi delegate, W.W. Lucas offered a resolution to establish a committee to examine needs of Black members for Black Episcopal leadership. Instead of forming the proposed committee as in the resolution, the General Conference forwarded the resolution straight to the Committee on Episcopacy. There upon, the formal report of the Committee on

¹²⁸ Henretta, Brody, and Dumenil, *America's History*, 688, 690-692.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 702.

¹³⁰ Shockley, *Heritage and Hope: The African-American Presence in the United Methodism*, 86-87.

Episcopacy was forwarded to the General Conference to select two [Black] general superintendents to be elected on a separate ballot. The recommendation voted by the General Conference guaranteed, for the first time in the history of the denomination, the selection of Black Episcopal leadership with all the privileges and rights accredited to that position. Robert E. Jones and Mathew W. Clair, Sr. were elected to these historic leadership positions.¹³¹

Women in Ministry

The 1920 General Conference was historic for its positive acknowledgement and endorsement of women for ministry. Before this General Conference, women were denied all clergy rights and privileges. A formal action was taken by the General Conference validating the issuing of licenses for women who wanted to become local preachers. The first Black Annual Conference to issue a local preacher's license as a result of the General Conference's action was the Upper Mississippi, in 1920, for Mrs. Mary E. Jones of the Greenwood District. In 1926, additional actions were voted for equal clergy rights for women. Laura S. Lange was ordained a local deacon in 1926 and later as a local elder, the first woman to be ordained in a Black annual conference.¹³²

Historical Overview

The 1920s presented an America moving toward a modern, urban community whose foundation was on corporation and mass consumer consumption. In various ways, movies, radios, and different mass media fostered the advancement of unified culture for

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 87-88.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 53.

the nation. The developing culture stressed leisure, consumption, and amusement.

Nevertheless, a small segment of Americans were in a position to benefit from the cozy, yet opulent, lifestyles advocated by the modernistic advertising business. In order to purchase the comforts of the contemporary life including cars, radios, vacuum cleaners and toasters, families required a middle-class income. Whole categories of people were omitted which included farmers, the majority of African Americans, and a plurality of the immigrants from Europe and Mexico.¹³³

To some, the contemporary cultural values of the 1920s were *persona non gratis*. Cultural conflict arose concerning consumption of alcoholic drinks and the teaching of scientific theories. The 1924 National Origins Acts which restricted immigration, except to residents of the Western Hemisphere. The split over immigration provided a basis for a rejuvenated Ku Klux Klan in the mid-1920's to direct a nativist (native Whites) crusade of threats and violence toward Catholics and Jews along with Blacks. The Klan of the 1920s received backing in politics in the Far West, the Southwest, and the Midwest. Particularly in Oregon, Indiana, Oklahoma, Klansmen were winning elections to local positions to state legislatures and at the apex of its influence in 1925, the Ku Klux Klan had more than three million members. Following 1925, the Klan underwent a precipitous fall due to wide-spread competition and the striking disclosure that Grand Dragon (Leader) David Stephenson, the Klan's countrywide leader, had kidnapped and sexually

¹³³ *Ibid.*

abused his prior secretary, causing her to commit suicide. The Ku Klux Klan stayed in power in the South.¹³⁴

The 1920s was a period in which conforming collections of arts and writings originated from Harlem, the hub of Black life in New York City. In the 1920s, the influx of outstanding Black artists and writers recouped a cultural connection with their African heritage. The flowering of this cultural and political awakening has commonly been referred to as the “Harlem Renaissance.” Black achievement or experience was portrayed in the writings of Claude McKay, Jean Toomer, and Jessie Fauset, while Countee Gullen and Langston Hughes emphasized poetry, Langston Hughes wrote novels, plays and essays. Savage employed sculpture to convey her message, and Zora Neale Thurston drew upon folklore to write short stories and novels. Jazz music seized significant elements of the 1920’s culture. The earliest Jazz (Jazz refers to improvisational form of music) musicians were Black and the most famous artists were composer-pianist Ferdin and (Jelly Roll) Moton, trumpeter Louis (Satchmo) Armstrong, composer and band leader Edward (Duke) Ellington, and singer Bessie Smith, “the empress of the Blues.”¹³⁵

During this period, the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) was founded by Jamaican Marcus Garvey and fostered racial pride in the Black working class. The UNIA, at the peak of its power, boasted of four million members, published a newspaper, the *Negro World*, received donation monies for the Black Star, the steamship

¹³⁴ Henretta, Brody, Dumenil, *America’s History*, 734.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 723, 716-717.

company, which was to trade with the West Indies and transport Blacks back to Africa.

In 1925, Garvey was found guilty of mail fraud; two years later his sentence was commuted by President Coolidge and he was ordered deported to Jamaica. Lacking the dynamic and inspirational leadership of Marcus Garvey, the movement fell apart.¹³⁶

Republican political dominance persisted with Herbert Hoover's election as president. Hoover planned to increase the economic expansion of the 1920's and looked for a "final triumph over poverty." Hoover presided instead over the worst depression in American history. Among many reasons for the Great Depression; were speculation in stocks, consumer spending that outpaced wages and salaries, consumers who were depleted of both, cash and credit, prolonged deficiencies in significant industries, and a frail international financial system.¹³⁷

With the depression persisting, Hoover selected a double-tined plan. Denoting Hoover's perspective of voluntarism and his dependency on business, the President requested that corporate executives preserve the income and industrial growth plane to reconstruct American assurance in the financial system. Hoover also acknowledged that voluntarism probably would not be sufficient because of the exigency to push for reduction in taxes to heighten personal and business spending, and summon state and local government to expand spending on public work projects. In 1932, the President had obtained unheard of augmentation of public projects to \$423 million. The biggest blunder of Hoover's was his rejection of straight forward federal relief for the

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 726.

¹³⁷ Henretta, Brody, Dumenil, *America's History Since 1865*, 728, 734.

unemployed rather than spending on private charities. Hoover failed to understand that unemployment was too wide-spread for charity organizations and state and local relief organizations to solve.¹³⁸

After Hoover's approach was ineffectual the American electorate elected Franklin D. Roosevelt to address the issues of overwhelming unemployment, a banking emergency, and a public on the edge of hopelessness. The First New Deal focused on spurring economic recovery, furnishing work and relief to the unemployed, correcting defects and abuses in the various financial systems. The 1933 Emergency Banking Act allowed banks to resume operations if they demonstrated adequate cash reserves upon Treasury investigation. Another banking act in 1933, the Glass-Steagall Act, moreover, tried to repair public reassurance; it established the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) that guaranteed deposits up to \$2,500.00. Four thousand lending facilities closed up months before Roosevelt's inauguration however just sixty one shut their doors in 1934.¹³⁹

In the Second New Deal, Roosevelt advanced social legislation that would furnish financial protection for Americans. The Second Deal legislation that impacted workers was the Wagner Act of 1935 that allowed workers to become members of unions and guard workers being subjected to force, for example, losing one's job due to endeavoring to organize union. Under the National Labor Relation Board (NLRB), a federal agency was provided the power to protect employees from employers exercising undue

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 728-729.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 739.

influence, oversee the elections for union delegates, and assure the right to bargain collectively.¹⁴⁰

The next major significant introduction of legislation was the Social Security Act of 1935 that stipulated an old-age pension for employees of free enterprises and created a combined federal-state mechanism for paying unemployed employees. Due to southern Democrats antagonism to the legislation, both farm and domestic service jobs were prohibited from either part of the plan. The Social Security Act was paid for by required financial support jointly of employers and employees. Also, the plan included more than pension and unemployment compensation. It assisted diverse groups of people; the blind, the deaf, the disabled and dependent children.¹⁴¹

An enhanced program was sought to deal with this labor shortage in the private sector. In 1935, the Work Progress Administration (WPA) replaced the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) that furnished funds to state relief projects, however, the WPA placed people immediately on the Federal Employment Registry. While Blacks comprised around eighteen percent of the WPA's recipients, they only composed ten percent of Americans resulting from their state of being poor. The Resettlement Administration (RA), created in 1935, aided small farmers and tenants to acquire land, before the Southerners in the legislature severely lashed the RA budget. Then the National Youth Administration was established in 1935 to supply jobs for young people and give assistance to college and high school students and for projects for young dropouts from school. In 1935, the Rural Electrification Administration (REA)

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 746.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 746-747.

was created, when only one-tenth of the nation's 6.8 million farms had electricity. But by 1940, forty percent had electricity and about ten years after, ninety percent had electricity. As a final point, the New Deal did not attack gender and racial inequities head-on, though its overall plans benefited the well-being of women and Blacks and other minorities.¹⁴²

Debate over Reunification of the Methodist Church

Attempts mounted after the separation of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal, South, in 1844, for unification immediately following the Civil War and specifically after 1876. A joint meeting of the commissioners declared both churches were legitimate branches of the same denomination. The accounts of the Joint Commission's meetings provided overwhelming proof that the "status of [Blacks] in the General Conference was the main concern to be resolved. This concern, the status of the Black membership in the reorganized church, appeared in the 688 page account of the Savannah, Georgia meeting in 1918. Methodist Episcopal Church Bishop Earl Cranston expressed this view: It was thought that if we could come to an agreement as to the status of the [Blacks] the other matters will adjust themselves to correspond to that understanding."¹⁴³

Three different viewpoints emerged in the report of the Joint Commission on Unification. One perspective, identified by southern and northern backers, did not desire to see Blacks stay in the denomination but in an African Association of General

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 747, 754, 750.

¹⁴³ Dwight W. Culver, *Negro Segregation in the Methodist Church* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1953), 60-61.

Conference. Another perspective of the northern supporters was one of opposition to surrendering the privileges and rights of Blacks to obtain unification; these church members saw the idea of “race consciousness and discrimination as unbiblical.” The last group of Black leaders, who wanted to maintain a functional brotherhood in the Methodist Church, was prepared to make voluntary offerings and concessions to assist in the unification.¹⁴⁴

The schedule for the entire session, of the subsequent Joint Commission on Unification held in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1919, dealt only with the position of the Black Methodist members. Prior to the Plan of Union being approved, the 1924 Methodist Episcopal Church voted for the regional jurisdictional conferences that remained. The White Methodist Episcopal Church, South obtained a majority vote, yet it was not the three fourths vote necessary for approval. The reason the 1924 plan was not voted on, was that it required “social equality” for [Blacks]. Both the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Protestant Church in 1928, appointed a Committee on Interdenominational Relations. The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1934, supported new negotiations on union and the Joint Commission on Unification commenced in August, 1934, in Chicago, Illinois. Also, two additional meetings of the Joint Commission were held in Louisville, Kentucky, March 13-14, 1935 and Evanston, Illinois, August 14-16, 1938.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 63, 67.

¹⁴⁵ *Culver, Negro Segregation in the Methodist Church*, 68-69; *Shockley, The African-American Presence in the United Methodism*, 112.

The Establishment of the Central Jurisdiction

The Plan of Union was introduced at the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Columbus, Ohio, in 1936. At this General Conference, a two-hour discussion on allegations of discrimination against Black ministers in the Church took place. No other issues were raised. The 1936 Methodist Episcopal Church voted 470 to 83 in approval of union. Thirty White delegates and the majority of 62 Black delegates voted against the plan. The Methodist Protestant Church voted the Plan of Union at the General Conference at High Point, North Carolina, on May 23, 1936, one day before the vote by the Methodist Episcopal Church, by a vote of 142 to 39. Methodist Protestants were against the Plan of Union for reasons other than segregation and these involved its original opposition to Episcopal administration pointing toward any type of centralized power. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, at the General Conference session in Birmingham, Alabama, on April, 1938, approved the Plan of Union by a vote of 334 to 26.¹⁴⁶

The Plan of Union received a theological foundation from Dean Albert C. Knudson of the Boston University School of Theology who supported the idea that racial segregation could be vindicated by Christian Theology. According to Knudson,

The only social basis for denouncing all social separation or segregation as un-Christian is to be found in the theory of racial amalgamation. Those who favor amalgamation think God made a mistake in creating different races or that he had nothing to do with their creation....The theory of racial amalgamation is not a Christian theory. The Christian theory is the theory of self-respect, racial self-respect. It holds that God created the different races, that he had a purpose in doing so and that each race has its contribution to make toward the total life of

¹⁴⁶ Culver, *Negro segregation in the Methodist Church*, 69-70, 76-77; Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism*, 255.

mankind, not through racial elimination, but through racial education and self-development is the divine purpose realized....The Christian view of God as Creator leads us to look with reverence and respect upon every race, and especially upon the race and especially upon the race in whose bosom God has given us life....¹⁴⁷

The view of Knudson supported social and racial segregation as biblical.

William McClain has made the case that “when race is used to classify people socially, when race is used as a symbol to set people apart for differential treatment, the term with all its inaccuracies, becomes a weapon. This appears to be a clear case of race being used as a weapon.” What Knudson failed to understand was that “God did, indeed, make every being too proud of the blessing of his or her features, but not to place a value on them above the features of others.” McClain then correctly pointed out that “Knudson, however, by supporting such a stance was saying that God supports oppression of races, not, through racial elimination, which Knudson incorrectly sees as the opposite of racial separation, but racial segregation and the superiority of one group over another.”¹⁴⁸

At the Uniting General Conference on May 10, 1939, in Kansas City, Missouri, delegates from the three denominations proclaimed the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church would be designated as “The Methodist Church.” The Plan of Union authorized a quadrennial General Conference session and for six Jurisdictional Conferences in the United States; five of the six Jurisdictional Conferences (Jurisdictional Conferences composed of a

¹⁴⁷ Culver, *Negro Segregation in the Methodist Church*, 73.

¹⁴⁸ William B. McClain, *Traveling Light: Christian Perspectives on Pilgrimage and Pluralism* (New York: Friendship Press, 1981), 34.

number of representatives or delegates of annual conferences in geographically constituted regions), were the Northeastern, Southeastern, North Central, South Central and Western. The sixth was the Central Jurisdiction which comprised the nineteen [Black] conferences and missions in the Methodist Episcopal Church. The separate jurisdiction for [Blacks] was a new element in Methodist unification, however, separate [Black] conferences were not new. The jurisdictional conferences main responsibilities were electing their own bishops, determining boundaries of their annual conferences, and advancing the different concerns within these specific areas. The sixth jurisdiction had legal rights to equal representation on the national boards and committees created by the General Conference.¹⁴⁹

It needs to be recognized that the Methodist Church, in creating the Central Jurisdiction, utilized a symbol of segregation and a means in which segregation was enabled to continue. The Methodist Church demonstrated surrender to the currents of racist inclinations and the predominate lack of moral ethics of American society. The Methodist Church yielded and was manipulated by economic, cultural, political, and social influences. Despite the unfavorable circumstances that brought about the establishment of the Central Jurisdiction there were some possible advantages for Black Methodists. The first benefit for Blacks was the guarantee of proportionate participation in the organizational structure of the church; second, a chance for growth in leadership by handling their own affairs, and, finally, chance to show what Blacks could do. The main disadvantages for Black Methodists versus White Methodists were that Blacks had

¹⁴⁹ Culver, *Negro Segregation in the Methodist Church*, 69, 81; Jack M. Tuell, *The Organization of the United Methodist Church*, Revised edition (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1982), 30.

farther to travel under the supervision of the Black constituency. The Black district might cover territory located in the geographical area supervised by five White bishops. Black and White bishops were not familiar with the other even though their districts covered similar territory.¹⁵⁰

A Period of Proclamation, 1944-1956

During the twelve years, from 1944 to 1956, known as the period of proclamation, the General Conference stated: “We look to the ultimate elimination of racial discrimination in the Methodist Church.” The Church also appointed a study group to consider a fresh relationship of all races included in the Methodist Church, reporting back to the 1948 General Conference. In his Episcopal Address at the 1952 General Conference, Bishop Paul Kern proclaimed that: “To discriminate against a person solely upon the basis of his [her] race is both unfair and un-Christian. Every child of God is entitled to that place in society which he [or she] has won by his [or her] industry, his [or her] integrity and his [or her] character.” The 1952 General Conference passed a resolution so that [Black] churches could more easily transfer from the Central Jurisdiction to a Regional Jurisdictional Conference. The 1956 General Conference unanimously approved Amendment IX to the Constitution, which permitted for the voluntary transfer of conferences, local churches or part of Annual Conferences from the Central Jurisdiction into the geographically located regional jurisdictions. The General Conference of 1956 adopted a declaration of purpose: “There is no place in the Methodist Church for racial discrimination or enforced segregation...we recommend that

¹⁵⁰ Culver, *Negro Segregation in the Methodist Church*, 92-94.

discrimination or segregation by any method or practice whether in conference structure or otherwise, be abolished with reasonable speed.”¹⁵¹

Historical Overview

The emergence of fascism and the militaristic expansionist agenda in Germany, Italy, and Japan resulted in the eruption of World War II. At first, the American people supported a position of non-entanglement. The nation’s position underwent an evolution. Congress passed the Neutrality Act of 1935, which prohibited the commerce of weapons with countries in conflict. In 1937, Congress enacted a Neutrality Act that indicated if a nation in conflict desired to buy non weapons from the United States, it must buy them with cash and carry them in their vessels. In 1939, the Neutrality Act was changed to permit the purchase of weapons on a cash and carry principle. Roosevelt was persuaded to enact the Lend-Lease Act that empowered the President to send weapons and materials to nations regarded as critical to the security of the United States. In June, 1941, A. Philip Randolph, President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, threatened a march on Washington to desegregate the armed forces and force defense contractors to employ more African Americans. Roosevelt, in return for Randolph stopping the march, signed Executive Order 8802 that forbade discrimination in defense industries and government agencies due to race, creed, color, or national origin and created the Fair

¹⁵¹ Shockley, *Heritage and Hope: The African-American Presence in the United Methodism*, 200-202.

Employment Practice Commission (FEPC) to monitor compliance, without an enforcement mechanism.¹⁵²

The surprise attack by Japan on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, resulted in the United States entering World War II. In World War II, the military increased to in excess of fifteen million men between the ages of eighteen and forty-four men. Military services were marred by racial discrimination and segregation for the about one million Blacks in uniform who faced auxiliary responsibilities, while Native Americans and Mexican Americans were received into regular military service. The depression period of unemployment evaporated with a war industries furnishing about seven million new jobs. As a result, a significant number of White women and African Americans obtained manufacturing jobs and unions profited from the urgent requirements of their membership, engaging in collective bargaining for increased wages and better work environments for their workers. Furthermore, the conflict with Nazism resulted in the “Double V” crusade victory over Nazism overseas and victory over racism and injustice in America. During this period, religious and racial hatred prevented the entrance of Jews into America and caused the coercive imprisonment in concentration camps of 112,000 Japanese Americans, an ignominious failure of civil rights.¹⁵³

The close connection the government and the American people continued in World War II with the origination of a general income taxation, and the passage in 1944 of a GI (Government Issued) Bill of Rights. The Service-men Readjustment Acts of 1944. The GI Bill of Rights furnished education, job training, medical care, pensions, and mortgage

¹⁵² Henretta, Brody, Dumenil, *America's History*, 796, 769-771, 780-781.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 796, 775, 777, 780, 784-785, 787.

loans for men and women who rendered military duty. The outlook of Allied success appeared gloomy in most of 1942. By 1943, however, the Allies had become assertive in part due to progress by the Soviet forces on the eastern front and the American naval forces in the Pacific, so by the conclusion of 1944 victory seemed assured. The United States came out of the war basically undamaged and the U.S. exclusively possessed the atomic bomb, the most destructive device developed to that point. At the conclusion of World War II, a worse problem lay ahead: the start of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union.¹⁵⁴

The Cold War commenced as a struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union involving Eastern Europe. Initially, in the struggle, the United States selected the George Kennan Diplomatic Plan (known as the Kennan Doctrine) meant basically for Europe, then, the plan extended to Asia. When China fell to Mao's Communist forces, Truman signed the first executive order in 1948 that desegregated the armed forces and defeated Dewey, the Republican candidate, in the 1948 election. The first impact of that extension was the Korean War, and containment of communism became America's motivating force in dealing with the Third World. An atmosphere of terror arose from internal subversion that led to McCarthyism and there was pressure for a major re-evaluation of the nation's strategic program. A Marshall Plan of massive economic assistance was instituted to rebuild Europe and a collective security alliance, National Security Council, was created by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 796, 781.

protect Western Europe against Soviet aggression. National Security Council-68 pressed for a major evaluation of the nation's strategic program.¹⁵⁵

During the period of the Cold War, the United States experienced an unequal level of prosperity which was delineated by large corporations. Postwar couples were young when married and had several children; if they were White and middle class they reared their offspring in an atmosphere of suburban relaxation and consumer oriented practices and a culturally conforming society. Unfortunately, not every segment of society encountered the postwar prosperity. The postwar metropolitan areas became inhabited by the poor who possessed few resources. Black migrants, as opposed to initial immigrants, faced an urban marketplace that rejected them. By 1960, the poor and half the nation's African Americans were residing beyond the South. Devoid of economic advancement, confronted by dominant racial prejudice and discrimination, many were transformed into the nation's underclass. Although, in the southern states, racism caused a civil rights eruption that Whites dared not dismiss, the simmering discrepancies of the postwar era, the Cold War worries residing in suburban domesticity, the stress on women's existence, income and racial disparity, were catalysts for the dissent that began in the 1950s.¹⁵⁶

When Dwight Eisenhower became president, civil rights were destitute of an advocate in the White House. In the meanwhile, two NAACP attorneys, Thurgood Marshall and William Hastie fostered a number of experimental trial cases to contest racial discrimination. In the test case that included a Black student, *Linda Brown v The Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, NAACP's Chief Counsel, Thurgood Marshall

¹⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 828, 809, 829.

¹⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 850, 858.

argued against the Topeka, Board of Education decision that required Linda Brown to enroll and be present at a remote segregated school instead of a close by White school. Marshall made the case that this obligatory segregation sanctioned by the Topeka Board of Education was not constitutional since it was a violation of Brown's right of equal protection of the laws assurance of the Fourteenth Amendment. The Supreme Court on May 17, 1954, in an unanimous ruling, concurred, vacating the *Plessy v Ferguson* theory of "separate but equal."¹⁵⁷

President Eisenhower reluctantly acquiesced to the Brown ruling, however, believed it an error and was not enthusiastic concerning pledging federal forces to deal with it. The turning point occurred in Little Rock, Arkansas, in September, 1957, when nine Black students endeavored to attend all White Central High School. Governor Fanbus summoned the National Guard to block them. Eisenhower ordered one thousand federal soldiers to Little Rock and nationalized the Arkansas National Guard, commanding them to defend these African Americans. Eisenhower ended up becoming the first president after Reconstruction to deploy federal soldiers to defend Blacks' rights. Little Rock showed that White opposition could overwhelm the court's ruling, if not strongly enforced and that executive action was necessary.¹⁵⁸

Provoked by one diminutive decision of resistance on December 1, 1955 Rosa Parks, a seamstress in Montgomery, Alabama, declined to surrender her seat on a city bus to a White man, causing African Americans in the South to adopt nonviolent dissent. Parks was arrested and accused of breaking a municipal segregation statute.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 853.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

Furthermore, Rosa Parks was suitable for the role that the Montgomery NAACP campaign developed in opposition to segregated buses. The Montgomery Black community migrated to the direction of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the newly selected pastor of the Dexter Street Baptist Church, for direction. King, following Park's arrest, supported an approach to boycott Montgomery's bus company until integrated. For 381 days, Montgomery African Americans carpooled or walked to their jobs. But not until the Supreme Court decision in November 1956, stating bus segregation was not constitutional, did the municipality of Montgomery ultimately acquiesce. King, because of the Montgomery bus boycott, was propelled to national eminence. In 1957, both Martin Luther King, Jr. and Ralph Abernathy created the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), headquartered in Atlanta. The African American church combined with SCLC and the NAACP became the primary promoters for racial equality. The conflict over civil rights began another phase in Greensboro, North Carolina, on February 1, 1960, when four African American students insisted on service at the Woolworth's White only lunch counter. This inspired a sit in movement in the South, which, by the end of 1960, involved 50,000 participants in sit-ins with 3,600 of the participants incarcerated. In 126 metropolises of the South, African Americans were finally permitted to eat at Woolworth's lunch counters. The foundation had been put in place for civil rights crusades of the 1960s¹⁵⁹

During this period Americans were longing for a re-declaration of religion. Church membership skyrocketed from forty nine percent of the populous in 1940 versus seventy

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 853, 855, 858.

percent in 1960. A sizeable number of people came into the evangelical Protestant denominations, particularly from an extraordinary group of new preachers, the most famous of whom was the Reverend Billy Graham. Graham innovatively employed television, radio, and publicity to disseminate the gospel. This religious re-awakening was interwoven in the period of the Cold War with Americans foreseeing themselves as a righteous people versus the godless Communism.¹⁶⁰

Abolition of the Central Jurisdiction

Dr. Harold C. Case endeavored to amend the official statement of the Inter-jurisdictional Commission to the 1960 General Conference of the Methodist Church as its expressed goal, the abolition of the Central Jurisdiction by due constitutional process by 1968. Following the defeat in the 1960 General Conference, the 1960 Central Jurisdictional Conference selected a Committee of Five whose command was to create an approach for the removal of the Central Jurisdiction. The Committee of Five advocated a study conference, which the Central Jurisdiction assembled on March 26-28, 1961, in Cincinnati, Ohio. In a paper called "The Central Jurisdiction Speaks, these fundamental principles were enunciated:

1. The fundamental objective in the dissolution of the Central Jurisdiction must be de facto inclusiveness in the Methodist Church.
2. The minimum requirements for de facto inclusiveness are the absence on all levels of church life of patterns and policies based on race or color.
3. Each step taken to dissolve the Central Jurisdiction must be an integral part of an overall plan or program to abolish all forms of racial segregation and discrimination from the Methodist Church.¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 842.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 204.

The bottom line was a fundamental change in policy concerning racial segregation.

The dissolution of the Central Jurisdiction was a chief interest of the April, 1964 General Conference session as it met in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In Bishop Gerald Kennedy's Episcopal Address, the feelings of most delegates of the 1964 General Conference were conveyed when he stated: We believe that this General Conference should insist upon the removal, from its structures, any mark of racial segregation and do it without wasting time.¹⁶² Then the General Conference adopted these actions:

a). All local churches should be opened to all persons without regard to race or national origin, or economic condition. [This motion restored in the Discipline (deals with what one does and are the official rules of the Methodist Church) of the Methodist Church a requirement that was in the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church from 1884.]

b). The General Conference adopt a detailed plan of action for the elimination of the Central Jurisdiction, which presupposed that the 1964 Central Jurisdictional Conference keep its commitment, made through its committee of Five, that it would realign its conferences geographically so no conference boundaries or area would be located in any other regional jurisdiction.

c). In order to assume the burden of inadequate salaries and pensions in the Central Jurisdiction, the 1964 General Conference create a temporary general aid fund.

d). The creation of a Jurisdiction Advisory Council to work within each Jurisdiction to deal with matters related to the questions of transfers and mergers.¹⁶³

These steps and actions of the 1964 General Conference commenced the process of the elimination of the Central Jurisdiction.

In the atmosphere of that period, the 1964 General Conference adopted the W. Astor Kirk Amendment to the 1964 report of the Inter-jurisdiction Commission to the

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ Shockley, *Heritage and Hope: The African-American Presence in the United Methodism*, 204.

General Conference, not to continue any segregated structure of the Central Jurisdiction into the new church beyond the 1968 time of union (refers to the merger with Evangelical United Brethren Church to take place in 1968). An amendment was adopted by Major J. Jones requesting a progress report of the Commission on Inter-jurisdictional Relations work and that a progress report be submitted at the proposed 1966 Special Session in Chicago.¹⁶⁴

Historical Overview

John F. Kennedy embarked on the politics of hope in the 1960 presidential election; however, the domestic achievements of Kennedy's New Frontier were restrictive in scope. The Kennedy administration was able to convince Congress to vote to adopt Peace Corps legislation (that revealed to developing countries there was a better approach than Communism), passed Food for Peace Program legislation (which distributed surplus agricultural products to the Third World), and the \$20 billion joint participation program for the Americas known as the Alliance for Progress (a program between the United States combined with Latin America to transpose the phenomena of paucity and foster economic development). On the domestic agenda the Kennedy Administration obtained the passage of a bill that provided for the enormous growth in the budget for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), legislation to increase the minimum wage, and a bill enlarging the Social Security program. But the Kennedy Administration

¹⁶⁴ Shockley, *Heritage and Hope: The African-American Presence in the United Methodism*, 205; Graham, *Black United Methodists: Retrospect and Prospect*, 102.

failed to enact federal aid for education, mass transportation legislation, and medical insurance for the elderly legislation.¹⁶⁵

Then in 1961, the United States backed a failed attempt to oust Fidel Castro's government in Cuba through the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuban exiles that operated out of Nicaragua and various places in the Caribbean. Later, in 1962, a significant encounter with the Soviet Union happened involving Soviet building of nuclear missile bases in Cuba. Following President Kennedy's establishment of a quarantine on all offensive military equipment headed for Cuba, the Soviets withdrew the intermediate range ballistic missiles in Cuba. In August, 1963, the United States, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain agreed to prohibit the testing of nuclear weapon in the atmosphere; referred to as the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, and also created a telecommunication hotline between Washington and Moscow in case of crisis. Kennedy received as legacy from the Eisenhower Administration in the form of early American involvement in Vietnam. Support for the Diem government, put in place by Eisenhower in 1954, was evaporating due in part to its being degraded and suppressive. Opposition came from North Vietnam which backed a National Liberation Front (the Viet Cong). The Kennedy Administration endorsed a military ouster of Diem, which occurred on November 1, 1963. By this time, in Vietnam, the United States we had 16,000 American advisors (Green Beret Special Forces) that involved helicopter forces.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ Henretta, Brody, Dumenil, *America's History*, 892, 863-864.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 868-869, 893.

The protest movement was encouraged by the favorable results of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee's (SNCC) sit in movement about integrating lunch counters in 1960; the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) sponsored a number of freedom rides on interstate bus lines which focused on Supreme Court decisions opposing segregation in interstate commerce. The television nightly news clips caused Attorney General Robert Kennedy to send federal marshals to protect the riders. In 1962, James Meredith integrated the University of Mississippi under the protection of federal soldiers. In 1962, facing firm local opposition in Albany, Georgia, SCLC and Martin Luther King endeavors were also abandoned. In April, 1963, as thousands of Blacks demonstrated against segregation in downtown Birmingham, Alabama, they were confronted with fire hoses and "attack dogs" released on them by Police Chief "Bull" Connor and the police department. The furious assault was viewed on the national television evening news and stunned most Americans which aided in creating support for the Civil Rights Movement among Northern Whites. August 28, 1963, saw the spectacular view of 250,000 Blacks and Whites marching together in the march on Washington and Martin Luther King's dynamic "I Have a Dream" speech. In 1964, SNCC and other groups organized the Freedom Summer voter registration drive. Finally in 1965, when the march from Selma to Montgomery became "Bloody Sunday," violence directed at the marchers impelled the enactment of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. It outlawed literacy tests and other enactments that were employed by southern states blocking Blacks from registering to vote.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 864, 866-867.

The assassination of John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963, provided the means whereby the fallen leader attained a more magnificent lawmaking consequence than reached as president. President Lyndon Johnson took advantage of Kennedy's assassination to exercise his bargaining ability to advance much of Kennedy's crippled legislative agenda and a broader legislative agenda he dubbed the "Great Society." Defeating a filibuster from the South, Congress enacted in June, 1964, the central feature of the Civil Rights Act, Title VII, which prohibited discrimination in hiring because of race, religion, national origin, or sex. The Civil Rights Act assured equal access to public facilities and schools, while providing new compelling authority to United States attorneys general and creating the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) with the tools to forbid employment discrimination. The 1965 Voting Right Act prohibited literacy tests and other procedures southern states employed to block Blacks from registering to vote and empowered the attorney general to dispatch federal inspectors to register voters in any county where the voting age residents comprised less than fifty percent of the registered. Moreover, the Twenty-fourth Amendment of 1964, which prohibited the poll tax in federal voting and the Voting Rights Act, permitted millions of African Americans to register and vote.¹⁶⁸ A large amount of legislation was enacted involving funding education, Medicare, Medicaid, Job Corp, Volunteer in-Service to American, and the Immigration Act of 1965, which helped immigrants particularly from Asia and Latin America.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 871-872.

¹⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 873, 875.

The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution provided a mandate to Johnson in handling military operations in Vietnam unhindered. The escalation of the war involved the stationing of American soldiers on the ground, the heightening of massive bombing of North Vietnam. Soldier numbers increased from 23,300 in 1965, in 1966 to in excess of 380,000 in 1967 to 485,000 and by 1968, to 536,000. Public backing of the Vietnam War was favorable in 1965 and 1966, but by July 1967 a plurality of Americans opposed the Vietnam strategy. An antiwar movement developed after the escalation in 1965, particularly among college students who began to raise inquiry into the United States foreign policy. This surge in student protest occurred from alterations in the Selective Service System that in January 1966 revoked instant student deferments. To evade the draft, young men enrolled in the National Guard, proclaimed they were conscientious objectors, or became draft dodgers. Nationwide protest and strikes following 1967 became routine. The New Left confronted the issue of corporate pre-eminence in society. Extending outside of civil rights, the Black Power Movement advocated racial pride and assertiveness, which was an example for Mexican American and Native Americans. It was Vietnam that did more than anything else to undercut funding for the Great Society.¹⁷⁰

The Vietcong released an imposing, well-defined attack in South Vietnam tied to correspond with Tet, the Vietnam lunar new year holiday. The Tet offensive made a joke of formal declaration that the United States was nearing victory. Lyndon B. Johnson's shocking response was an announcement not to seek reelection. In 1968, the nation was shaken by assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert F. Kennedy and a wave of urban riots, driving an increasing broad based backlash of law and order. The Democrats

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 878-879.

confronted the election of 1968 in confusion. George Wallace of Alabama, who departed the Democrats to head a third party candidacy, ran his campaign on the backlash opposing civil rights. In late mid-September, Wallace was polling twenty one percent of the vote, however in November he acquired just thirteen and a half percent of the vote, carrying only five southern states. Both Republican Richard M. Nixon as well as Wallace stressed “law and order” in their candidacy, Nixon was victorious over Hubert H. Humphrey with just forty three and one fourth percent of the popular vote. It was obvious that the Wallace’s southern backing really would have, on the other hand, been received by Nixon as the South lurched to the Republican Party. A fresh ripple of conservatism clutched the country connected with the Republican Party and Richard Nixon.¹⁷¹

The Creation of the United Methodist Church

The 1964 Central Jurisdictional Conference session in Daytona Beach, Florida, realigned the boundaries of its Annual Conferences so that each conference was within the boundaries of the five regional jurisdictions. Immediately afterwards, the Delaware and Washington Conferences, previously part of the Central Jurisdiction, by merger, became a part of the Northeastern Jurisdiction, the Lexington Conference, also previously of the Central Jurisdiction by merger, became a member of the North Central Jurisdiction. The 1966 Special Session of the General Conference adopted the report of the Commission on the Inter-jurisdiction Merger Resolution, granted official approval for a special session of the Central Jurisdiction in 1967 to replace Bishop M. Harris, who

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 889, 893.

died in 1966, to dissolve the Central Jurisdiction. All the Annual Conferences of the new defunct Central Jurisdiction had been transferred and were in the process of merger with the various conferences of the regional jurisdictional conferences by 1972.¹⁷²

Finally, significant chores faced the United Methodist Church in 1968 at the conclusion of the United General Conference session in Dallas, Texas: first, the duty of uniting two denominations into an organic whole; second, the Christian ethical responsibility to unite the two races in the new church, that had formerly been segregated by practice and church law, creating an inclusive association; third, the realistic imperative of comprehending and reacting to the newly developing Black Consciousness Movement and its claim on justice and empowerment. Black Methodists recognized that United Methodism appeared more concerned with eradicating segregation than in providing for inclusiveness into the church structure.¹⁷³

Conclusion

The Wesleyan background, to which the current United Methodist Church heritage was derived, commenced with an evangelical thrust geared toward the lower classes, the outcasts, and the poor of society. Neither its founder, John Wesley, nor his brother Charles had been designated as lower classes. Wesley proclaimed a message of salvation to the miners and factory workers in cities such as Bristol and London, and various big cities of England. He was a graduate of Oxford University. Later, the gospel message was presented to the laboring classes, the dispossessed, the unchurched, and the common

¹⁷² Shockley, *Heritage and Hope: The African-American Presence in United Methodism*, 205-206.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 209.

folk who occupied the landscape of colonial America. There was a positive response in America among the poor and working class and dispossessed who heard the message delivered by Methodist ministers in America.

Wesley resided in America in Georgia from 1735-1737 and had the opportunity to observe in person, American slavery in operation. He upset the landowners in Georgia because he opposed the introduction of slavery into the Georgia Colony. Due to the unfavorable situation arising from the Sophia Hopkey Williamson affair, he was forced to return back to England, but he did not surrender up his opposition to slavery. Wesley's "Thoughts upon Slavery" written in 1774 has been evaluated by numerous historians as a hard-hitting attack on slavery. It was due to Wesley's uncompromising position in opposition to slavery that accounted for the reaction of Black Americans to Methodism, as well as the opposition by Thomas Coke, Francis Asbury, Freeborn Garrettson and the majority of early Methodist evangelists.

The first official vote opposing slavery in Methodism occurred at the Baltimore Conference of Methodist Societies in 1780. The 1784, Christmas General Conference session in Baltimore, in which the Methodist Church was established, took a definitive position and voted to denounce slavery, and then the slavery rule was to be administered to preachers and lay people as well. At the Conference in Baltimore six months later a compromise that the slavery rule applied only if it was in harmony with the laws of the states where members lived. Methodism and the way of confronting the issue of slavery of Blacks became indistinguishable from the narrative of American morality. It was the prospective indicated in both the church and in the nation, economic, political, social, and

psychological views. The Methodist Church believed it was not the business of the church to contradict the constituted legal stance of civic government, and this was the church position for a long period.

From 1836 to 1840 a new ground-swell of the abolitionism arose in nearly each annual conference outside the South demanding the end of slavery. In spite of the bishops attempt to stop the abolitionist from bringing the issue to the table, at the General Conference of 1844, the slavery issue came to a head. The Methodist Episcopal Church that was established sixty years before in Baltimore became two separate denominations and remained such for nearly a century.

The Civil War produced a heightened concern in the efforts of the Northern Methodist Episcopal Church for Blacks. At the General Conference session of 1864 in Philadelphia, the victory of the Union army was in sight and an agenda was created for the evangelization of the recently freed Blacks in the South. A two-fold approach was developed: 1) to create separate Black missionary annual conferences in the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and 2) to invade the South with teachers and missionaries to establish schools and colleges for training Blacks for citizenship in a democratic nation, and leadership within the church.

The Plan for the Union vote which united the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church South, and the Methodist Protestant Church divided continental United States into six jurisdictions, five were instituted geographically, the sixth, the Central Jurisdiction was comprised of the nineteen Black conferences of the former northern Methodist Episcopal Church. This was the first time in its history that a

policy of racial segregation was adopted into Constitution of the Methodist Church. The Black delegates rejected the Plan of Union while the White delegates voted decisively for it.

The United Methodist Church, and all those who came before it, developed and reflected the United States attitude toward the Black presence here. All of the major denominations were split concerning slavery. While the embryonic Methodist Church adopted an extremely strong position opposing slavery, it was a standard that could not be sustained under the stresses of society at large. When the Methodist Church confronted the issue of race, it addressed it by establishing Black Annual Conferences. Long years had passed before the main groups of Methodism were united together. The solution to the Black membership was structural segregation, the Central, which existed from 1940 to 1966. This situation reflected the rule in this country of separate local churches for Blacks and Whites.

The creation of the United Methodist Church in 1968 ending de jure segregation (assigned segregation) did not necessarily produce de facto integration (total assimilation). The racism which has so pervaded the society at large and to which the Methodist Church had surrendered by creating the Black Central Jurisdiction only disappeared to reappear in other venues and structures of the church. What the Black Methodists must ask themselves is whether those who stayed in the United Methodist Church are a loyal remnant upon which the existence of a truly inclusive fellowship depends, with the hope of reformation, or whether they are just a sentimental residue.

CHAPTER III

[BLACK]REGIONAL SDA CONFERENCES COMPARED TO [BLACK] CENTRAL JURISDICTION/ANNUAL CONFERENCES WITH WHITE SDA CONFERENCES

In this chapter, the case has been and is set forth, of the advantage of cultural pluralism in [Black] Regional Conferences in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in comparison with [Black] Central Jurisdiction/[Black] Annual Conferences in the Methodist Church and White SDA Conferences. A comparison will be made of the membership's growth rate of the [Black] Central Jurisdiction/ [Black] Annual Conferences from 1940 to 1964 and the [Black] Regional Conferences membership growth rate from 1946 to 1970. The differences involving the Central Jurisdiction [Black] Annual Conferences Income Fund and [Black] Regional Conferences Fund will be examined. Inquiry into the distinctions that emerge between the membership growth rate and Tithe Funds of [Black] Regional Conference and White SDA Conferences covering the periods from 1946-1970 and 1975-2000 are scrutinized. Whether there was a major factor in the SDA Church versus the Methodist Church or United Methodist Church involving church growth will also be considered.

The stated purpose for the establishment of [Black] Regional Conferences in the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church and [Black] Annual Conferences in the United Methodist Church is taking the gospel to Blacks in the United States. The "dialectic model" indicates that Black Churches are involved in utilizing the six parts of the

dialectically related polar opposites in connection with [Black] United Methodist Churches and [Black] Regional Conferences/Black SDA Churches. Inquiry will be made into the dialectical functions of the priestly and the prophetic, the other-worldly versus the, this-worldly, between universalism and particularism, between communal and the privatistic, between charismatic and the bureaucratic, and between the resistance and accommodations “model.”

Two ways in which the [Black] Central Jurisdiction/[Black] Annual Conferences were constituted are distinct from SDA [Black] Regional Conferences due to the manner the Central Jurisdictions were instituted. Observation will be made into the contrast between the Central Jurisdiction and the five other Methodist Jurisdictions. The importance of [Black] Regional Conferences created in 1944/1945 have and still have the same status and connection as White SDA Conferences to the union conference within their geographical area will be weighed. The differences between the compensation of SDA pastors and officials concerning their pay scale and that of pastors and officials in the United Methodist Church will be investigated. The old North American SDA Sustentation Program (retirement program) will be considered in comparison with the new defined contribution (workers and the employer contribute option) plan. Both the old North American Sustentation Program and the new defined contribution plan will be analyzed versus the defined benefit Regional Conferences Retirement Plan.

The University of Chicago’s award winning Church and Social Historian Martin Marty in *Under God Indivisible* confronted the divide that existed on racial issues throughout World War II. He shaped his discussion around Swedish sociologist Gunnar

Myrdal classic 1944, two-volume work, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*. Myrdal indicated that in World War II people of all races worldwide were looking at America to see how it handled the significant issue of race relations at home. His study exposed the inequalities between Blacks and Whites in America of “separate but equal” that had evolve after 1896. Marty pointed out that Myrdal noted that in one of the most impacted institutions on Black life, the church, segregation abounded. Additionally, there was hardly any interracial interaction between religious congregations in the North and South.¹

Marty raised the question whether the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of 1954, which addressed the compulsory component of elementary and secondary-education-in the American life, would exert influence on voluntary relations involving churches. Marty asserted as well that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. often referred to the statement of Yale Divinity School, Dean Liston Pope, who indicated that there existed and continued to exist the dismal fact “that the most segregated hour of Christian America is eleven o’clock on Sunday morning” (or Saturday morning) or “that the most segregated school is the Sunday School” (or Sabbath School).² It is evident that Christian America is almost as segregated today as it was when Yale Divinity School, Dean Pope made the statement that the most segregated hour is eleven o’clock on Sunday morning or (Saturday morning) even with the election of Barack Obama.

¹ Martin Marty, *God, Indivisible, 1941-1960*, Modern American Religion, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 3:68.

² *Ibid.*

In a 1991 study C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya define ‘the Black Church’ as having reference “to the pluralism of Black Christian churches in the United States...In general usage any Black Christian person is included in ‘the Black Church’ if he or she is a member of a Black congregation.”³ Lincoln and Mamiya decided to confine their functioning definition of “the Black Church” to seven major Black denominations that comprise more than eighty percent of Black Christians. Lincoln and Mamiya also acknowledge that another six percent of Black Christians in smaller Black communions also make up “the Black Church” along with their predominantly Black local churches and entities in predominately White denominations.⁴

Lincoln and Mamiya studied the churches and clergy that are composed of seven major historic Black denominations: the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church; the African Methodist Episcopal Zion (A. M.E.Z.) Church; the Christian Methodist Episcopal (C.M.E.) Church, the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Incorporated (N.B.C.); the National Baptist Convention of America, Unincorporated (N.B.C.A.); the Progressive National Baptist Convention (PNBC); and the Church of God in Christ (COGIC). Lincoln and Mamiya furnished a historical overview accompanied by statistical data and analyses regarding the seven major Black denominations.⁵

But what about the estimated fourteen percent of Blacks in the Roman Catholic Church and in predominantly white Protestant denominations such as the United

³ C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church?⁶ It is the purpose of this chapter to investigate a segment of these remaining groups, primarily the rise and development of [Black] Regional Conferences in the Seventh-day Adventist Church from 1944/1945-2001 in comparison with Central Jurisdiction/Black Annual Conference within the United Methodist Church or the Methodist Church from 1939 to 1964, and compare the rise and development of the nine predominately [Black] Regional Conferences with White SDA Conferences from 1944/1945-2001.

The “Dialectical Model”

It is important to examine what Lincoln and Mamiya have called the “dialectical model” of the Black Church. In the “dialectical model” Black Churches become institutions that are engaged in a continual sequence of dialectical tensions. Thus, the dialectical keeps pivotal opposites in tension, invariably moving between the polarities in historical time. In this chapter the dialectical model utilizes the six parts of the dialectically related polar opposites in its examination of Black United Methodist Churches compared with [Black] Regional Conferences/Black SDA Churches.⁷

The first is the dialectic between priestly and the prophetic functions. Lincoln and Mamiya have suggested all Black churches are engaged in dual duties. Priestly duties refer solely to those actions where worship and church maintenance functions are the

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, 12

primary responsibility. Prophetic duties in the traditional sense refer to “prophetic actively...pronouncing a radical word of God’s judgment.”⁸

Methodists’ major emphasis in this regard is to the priestly function, perfectionism and the conversion experience needed to be exhibited in daily growth in complete holiness and Christian behavior. The “second blessing” encountered moving on toward perfection and that perfection sanctification was attainable or even necessary for the salvation of the converted Christian. After the conversion experience, it was the experience of conviction, repentance, and regeneration which mainly dominated the attention of the adherent. Sydney Ahlstrom states that John Wesley was the greatest Protestant preacher of Christian perfection.⁹

Seventh-day Adventists fit the Peter Berger motif of the prophetic pole of “a message to be proclaimed of God’s judgment to the world.” Seventh-day Adventist’s stress Millennialism, the “doctrine of last things” frequently resting on a precise interpretation of the apocalyptic books of the Bible, (such as Daniel and Revelation), which encouraged Christians to prepare themselves and the world for the soon coming of Christ at the Second Advent. Also, Seventh-day Adventists place significance on illuminism or further revelation and illuminism of God’s purpose. Adventists ascribe to the view that God furnished an unique guidance in the emergence of the S.D.A. Church through the ministry of Mrs. Ellen G. White (1827-1915). Mrs. White is viewed by

⁸ Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 2 vols. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, 1972) 1: 575-576.

⁹ *Ibid.*, vol.1: 577-578.

Seventh-day Adventists as being an authentic prophetess in harmony with biblical teachings.¹⁰

The second element of the dialectic is between other-worldly versus this-worldly, which deals with the alignment that members possess with regard to the world. Lincoln and Mamiya indicate that “other-worldly” refers to being interested solely with heaven and eternal life, a pie-in-the-sky outlook that avoids political and social issues. “This-worldly” means being concerned with the matters of this world, specifically with politics and social issues, in the here and now.¹¹

The SDA church position regarding political and social issues may be summarized in a 1928 unsigned editorial in the *Review and Herald*. It stated that, “God has commissioned its church with a special message to the world....The message is to all men of every class. We cannot array ourselves on one side or the other of the great divisions of society that exist in the world. By so doing we shall close the door of entrance to hearts which otherwise might be reached.” Raymond E. Cottrell, in a *Review and Herald* editorial of July 29, 1965, wrote that Seventh-day Adventists are of the firm conviction that political questions, not directly involving religion or matters of conscience, are strictly out of bounds for churches and church agencies.¹²

Church Historian Arthur W. Spalding’s unpublished manuscript “Lights and Shades in the Black Belt” (1913) asserted, in regards to the race issue,

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1:579-582.

¹¹ Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, 12.

¹² “The Question of Politics,” *Review and Herald* (January 19, 1928), 10; Raymond F. Cottrell, “Churches Meddling in Politics,” *Review and Herald* (July 29, 1965), 12.

That in conditions which do not involve transgression of God's law....His Christian experience should not lead him to start a crusade against customs which do not interfere with the Christian's duty. It may be said that the attitude of Seventh-day Adventist in this matter is shaped by policy instead of principle, it is, rather a principle of policy instead of a principle of pleasure.¹³

In a 1965 *Review and Herald* editorial, Francis D. Nichols indirectly suggested disapproval of ministers who participated in the civil rights demonstrations. He indicates that while the SDA Church sympathized with "those underprivileged" it did not believe the solution resided in social protest. Showing the importance afforded by the church's message, Nichols wrote, "We have ever felt that we can best reveal true Christianity and thus best advance the Adventist cause, by taking the more quiet and perhaps indirect approach to problems that so often arouse human passions."¹⁴

In only a single public issue involving both the political and social prohibition did the church line become hazy. This special concern harmonized with the church's perspective on sound health. From 1900 to the 1930's, the *Review and Herald* argued in editorials and articles for backing prohibition. Adventists participated in temperance gatherings in various places in the United States and sent a formal written appeal to various political delegations. Historically, the SDA church has shunned controversy with the state,¹⁵ so that Adventists would emphasize the "other-worldly" aspect rather than a "this-worldly" perspective. The support of prohibition represented a departure.

¹³ Arthur W. Spalding, *Lights and Shades in the Black Belt*, unpublished book manuscript, E.G. White Publications, Office Document File: 376.0, Washington, D.C., 1924), 142.

¹⁴ Francis D. Nichols, "Unity in the Faith," *Review and Herald*, (April 29, 1965), 12.

¹⁵ Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart, *Seeking A Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1989), 146-148.

Whereas SDA's emphasized the "other-worldly," the Methodist Church stressed a "this-world" viewpoint. At the unity conference, three Methodist churches--Methodist Episcopal, Methodist Protestant, and the Methodist Episcopal, South-- combined to become the Methodist Church in 1939, with a Central Jurisdiction which set apart African American ministers and members in a racially segregated structure. During the same uniting conference, the Methodists, in 1939 voted a resolution "in opposition to the spirit of war now raging in the world." The spring of 1941 put the nation and churches nearer to war, but it was voted by the church to back those who were conscientious objectors. In 1944 at the General Conference of The Methodist Church, with the nation at war, the church voted to approve a pro-war stance. Obviously, the Methodist Church, assumed a pro-war and "this- worldly" position. Even the movement to abolish the Central Jurisdiction was influenced by the Supreme Courts' school-desegregation ruling in 1954.¹⁶

The third component of the model is the dialectic between universalism and particularism. Both Lincoln and Mamiya state that Black churches reflected the dialectical tension, the universalism of the Christian message and the particularism of their racial history. [Black] United Methodist Churches and [Black] Regional Conferences [Black] SDA Church after the crucial turning point of the Civil Rights Movement, from 1954 to 1968, emphasized both the universalism of the Christian message and the particularism of their racial heritage. [Black] SDA Churches and [Black] Regional Conferences and [Black] United Methodist Churches have continued

¹⁶ John G. McEllhenny, ed., *United Methodism in America: A Compact History* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1992), 116-117, 119-121.

comprehensive access to people of every race by promoting a powerful anti-racial bias stance. Their perspective has been distinct concerning particularistic racial outlook, specifically involving the Black Consciousness Movement, a movement which primarily developed around the concept that the struggle for civil rights and integration would be meaningless if the integration and the independence of Black selfhood were swallowed up in an ocean of whiteness. It is significant to grasp the dialectical tensions which occurred in all Black churches in regard to racial issues. In [Black] United Methodist church and [Black] Regional Conferences [Black] SDA Churches, particular Black Christians, also including ministers, have indicated an uneasiness in confronting their racial past and present, and would desire to declare the comprehensive gospel rather than to face the troublesome concerns of Christian racialism.¹⁷

The fourth area of interest is the dialectic between the communal and the privatistic. Neither the [Black] United Methodist Churches nor the [Black] Regional Conferences/Black SDA Churches take the privatistic approach. They are engaged in all facets of their member's lives: the political, economic, educational, and social matters.¹⁸ United Methodist bishop, Nolan B. Harmon, former Book Editor of the United Methodist Church and General Editor of the Encyclopedia of World Methodism, writes:

The Methodist Church was peculiarly suited to the American scene, whether it was the frontier or the crowded city; it is suited to the American temperament, which it has always expressed and embodied in all its actions and viewpoints. When Theodore Roosevelt was President, he once privately remarked to the chaplain of the United States Senate, who was a Methodist, 'Your church is the

¹⁷ Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, 12-13, 389.

¹⁸ Lincoln and Mamiya, *Black Church in the African American Experience*, 13; Nolan B. Harmon, *Understanding the United Methodist Church* 2nd edition (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974), 153.

church of America.' Alongside the great growth in numbers went a vast development in all areas of church life...Schools and colleges, were built...Orphanages and homes for the needy, the aged, and the infirmed were soon erected by the growing church.¹⁹

The Methodist Episcopal and Methodist Church were considered the unofficial Churches of American Society and the churches were involved in the widespread development of schools, colleges, orphanages, and nursing homes which addressed its people's needs. Church Historians and Sociologists Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart make the case that: quite apart from its distinctive theology, Adventism is a remarkable social phenomenon.

In 1985, the church in North America operated 1,231 primary schools, 347 secondary schools (90 of which offered a complete secondary education), ten colleges, and two universities. This constellation of institutions amounts to the largest Protestant school system in the United States and is second only to the education program of the Roman Catholic Church. The denominational health care network, Adventist Health System (AHS), consists of fifty-three hospitals and medical centers across the continent. AHS, which admits over 300,000 patients and makes nearly two million outpatient visits every year, is the seventh-largest health system in North America. Due to the communal aspect of the dialectic in both the [Black] United Methodist churches and the [Black] Regional Conferences/Black SDA Church, the privatistic element is seen to a lesser degree, which denotes a removal from the interest of the wider community to concentrate on addressing solely the spiritual exigency of its members.²⁰

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

²⁰ Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary, Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1989), 95-96; Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Churches in the American Experience*, 13.

The fifth area of importance is the dialectic between charismatic and bureaucratic.

Lincoln and Mamiya state that on a wide spread scale most Black churches and denominations have a propensity in the direction of the charismatic pole of progression. The [Black] United Methodist Churches and the [Black] Regional Conferences/Black SDA churches have a more bureaucratic proclivity due in large measure to the organizational structure of the United Methodist and SDA Church organization. However, 'organizational man or woman' who Lincoln and Mamiya indicate embody the bureaucratic style, are seldom discovered as the ministers of the most outstanding Black churches in the United States in Black denominations.²¹

Bull and Lockhart show that Adventists produced a centralized hierarchical system. It was also a structure that furnished the church's top leaders with great authority. The persons selected to become General Conference officers are seldom magnetic types. Rather these individuals are typically capable bureaucrats whose main quality is the skill to labor in a closely knit group. These individuals are commonly in middle or late middle age and are pulled nearly always from ministers who demonstrate valid evidence of achievement on the lower echelons of the church structure.²²

Noted Methodist writer Nolan B. Harmon describes the United Methodist Church, as a tightly knit organization, with bishops, boards, and conferences. Bishops are elected by the Jurisdictional Conferences (The Annual Conferences composed of larger regional divisions referred to as jurisdictions), are elected for life. A criticism leveled at the

²¹ Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Churches in the American Experience*, 13.

²² Bull and Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary, Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream*, 102.

United Methodist Church episcopacy (office of bishop) is that it is too much of a bureaucratic position and not enough of a pastoral position. In the United Methodist church, the bishop can be so mired in bureaucratic concerns that there is no opportunity to minister to the flock.²³

The sixth element in the model is the dialectic between resistance and accommodation. The accommodative track, according to Lincoln and Mamiya, has involved every Black person and every Black institution taking part in compromises in relationship to the two poles. As has been cited earlier, African American United Methodists and African American Seventh-day Adventist made the choice to settle for peaceful compromise rather than severing from their church. In their accommodative position, however, Black churches are seen as mediating institutions. Black churches, in their accommodative position, have operated as the primary cultural intermediaries of the standards, values, and hopes of white society. An illustration of this, following the Civil War the Black Church was the primary mediating and socializing vehicle for millions of former slaves, educating them concerning economic realism, encouraging them to secure an education, and assisting in maintaining their families, and supplying leadership in the early Black communities.²⁴ Nonetheless, while the accommodatist approach predominates, a resistant orientation does appear as important.

²³ Harmon, *Understanding the Organization of the United Methodist Church*, 95; Jack M. Tuell, *The Organization of the United Methodist Church*, Revised edition (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1982), 108-110.

²⁴ Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, 14-15.

Resistance meant opposing the stresses of American society by asserting African American cultural traditions. Black churches, due to being Black controlled and separate institutions, performed a major part in resistance. Lincoln and Mamiya show that politically, resistance has included both self-determination and self-affirmation. Following the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950's and 1960's and the endeavors to desegregate America, the accommodative stresses on Blacks and Black institutions have mushroomed. One significant role for Black Churches in the future will be as an historic depository of Black cultural traditions and an illustration of resistance and independence. In this context, the drive in the [Black] United Methodist Church segment endorsing the Black Methodist for Church Renewal Movement and in the Black SDA Churches for [Black] Regional Conferences represents an indication of resistance which included both self-determination and self-affirmation.²⁵

The dialectic model of the Black Church is beneficial in providing an explanation for the pluralism in the [Black] United Methodist Churches and [Black] Regional Conferences/Black Churches. The dialectical model aids in comprehending Gayraud Wilmore's contention that Black Churches have been "the most conservative" and "the most radical" institutions at the same time. The dialectical model of the Black Church mirrors W.E.B. Dubois's "reflective phenomenology of consciousness," that is "double-consciousness," summarizing both Euro-American heritages of African American people; "two struggling souls within one dark body."²⁶

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

²⁶ Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religious History of African American People* (Mary Knoll, N.Y.: Orbis. 1979), X; W.E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of*

Historical Overview

The Great Depression unveiled significant failures in the U.S. economy. Various problems in the economy extended from habitually depressed agricultural prices and irregular earnings delivery to commerce restraints, a surplus of consumer products and a limited money supply. Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) concentrated originally on direct economic assistance and recovery and acceptance of big business in his depression battling confederation. In his New Deal of 1935, FDR confronted the precarious situation of the disadvantaged, involving by 1937 sharecroppers and transitory workers seeking robust economic regulation, and greater taxes for the affluent. FDR advocated basic remedies like the Social Security Act, and the Wagner Act, protecting the rights of individuals to unionize.²⁷

FDR's resounding re-election achievement in 1936 resulted in the second New Deal which impacted various individuals in unique respects. The Tennessee Valley inhabitants and people throughout the West experienced governmental programs that produced hydro-electric plants and an expansion of the economic system. With sweeping unemployment, women were advised not to endeavor to seek employment; nevertheless, a significant number of females ignored the appeal, thus the female part of the work force increased. At the same time Blacks were aided by the New Deal recovery approach, FDR's administration neglected to deal with the issues of lynching and biased racial treatment. FDR's administration also failed to deal with unfair handling of native

Black Folks (New York: New American Library, 1969 edition), 45-46.

²⁷ Paul S. Boyer et., al, eds., *The Enduring Vision* 6th edition (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008), 783-784.

Mexican agricultural workers. Mexican agricultural workers confronted deportation challenges while planning labor strikes and pressing at the same time for improved earnings and employment conditions. In the case of Native Americans, the rights of tribes were reclaimed, preparing the foundation for the advancement of treaty assertions.²⁸

Following a period of turmoil, widespread depression and sectional divisions, war broke out in Europe in 1939. Even with the storm clouds gathering in Asia and Europe- the majority of Americans remained in a post-World War I isolationist stance. Only when the Japanese launched an attack on the American armada at Pearl Harbor, two years following the commencement of the war in Europe, did the U.S. actually enter the conflict. It involved America assumed a wartime posture and this adaptation for action altered the range and power of the federal government, enormously enlarging the powers of the President. The joblessness of the Great Depression was abruptly terminated, causing both American manufacturing to be more efficient and the American populous to have more economic success than ever before. There was also more engagement of the armed forces in the economic and educational system than at any prior time.²⁹

In order to attain a total victory, concluding with the consequence of minimum American casualties, Roosevelt focused on beating Germany initially. He postponed another beach head and forefront in Europe however, until the Soviet army defeated the German forces in Eastern Europe. At the same time, America proceeded with a two-

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 784-783.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 790-822.

forked assault, in the center of the Pacific and northward from Australia, causing Japan to be on the threshold of being vanquished.³⁰

At home, African American leaders realized even before the war that the U.S. must embark on a war stance as a consolidated nation. A. Philip Randolph, president of Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP) in 1941, admonished Roosevelt that unless discrimination was halted in the military and defense industries, a hundred thousand African Americans would march on Washington. FDR and Randolph settled for a mutual compromise. Roosevelt discharged Executive Order 8802, the first presidential command on racial matters after Reconstruction, which forbade discrimination in employment by companies involved in war connected efforts, also by federal agencies and all unions.³¹

In addition, the Fair Employment Practice Committee (FEPC) was created to check compliance. Despite the FEPC being deficient in compelling authority, the rapidly expanding war industries and workforce shortage due to the armed services draft concluded with about two million Blacks being employed in manufacturing and two hundred thousand in the federal civil service system. Membership by African Americans in labor unions doubled to 1.25 million, the amount of skilled and semi-skilled African Americans tripled, and approximately three hundred thousand African American women were employed in industry and civil service. In the years from 1942 to 1945, the share of African Americans in war industries increased from 3 percent to 9 percent, while the average earnings from Blacks grew from \$457 to \$1,976 a year versus an increase from

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 822.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 813.

\$1,065 to \$2,600 for whites. Some 1 million Blacks were in the armed services, the amount of Black officers went from five in 1940 to more than seven thousand in 1945. Black leaders pushed a “Double V” crusade to achieve victory over racial discrimination at home and over the Axis power overseas. The expansion of Black opportunities did not come without a price. The migration of 700,000 Blacks from the South resulted in racial violence occurring in 1943 in Harlem, Mobile, Alabama, Beaumont, Texas, and Detroit.³²

Church Growth and Development of the Membership of the [Black] Central Jurisdiction of the Methodist Church

In order to put the church growth and development of the Central Jurisdiction in the proper context, a review of how the Central Jurisdiction was established (under the plan to unite the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church) is essential. Methodism in the continental United States was divided into six jurisdictions; five were constituted according to geography, the sixth, the Central Jurisdiction was to be a racially segregated unit of the Church and the policy was written into the Constitution of the newly configured Methodist Church. A study was commissioned to examine the growth and development of the ministry of the Central Jurisdiction by Dr. Ralph A. Felton, as of March 1, 1953.³³

At the time of unification of the church, in 1939, there were nineteen conferences in the Central Jurisdiction. A March, 1953, study of the Central Jurisdiction showed the existence of 17 conferences, 1,776 pastors, and 343,726 members. There were a smaller

³² *Ibid.*, 813-812.

³³ Ralph A. Felton, *The Ministry of the Central Jurisdiction of the Methodist Church* (Madison, New Jersey: Drew University Theological Seminary, 1965), 3.

number of conferences than had been involved in the Central Jurisdiction because of the mergers of Florida and South Florida Conferences, and the merger of Atlanta and Savannah Conferences to establish the Georgia Conference.³⁴

Dr. Felton discovered that the Central Jurisdiction during the ten-year period, between 1941 and 1951 grew by only 1.9 percent while the entire Methodist Church grew by 18.4 percent. The study endeavors to address why the disparity existed between the Central Jurisdiction and the rest of the Methodist Church. Felton then focused on how this disparity between the Central Jurisdiction and the remainder of the Methodist Church could be resolved.³⁵

The first problem Felton's study confronted in his comparison was that the pastoral charges (churches) in each District in the Methodist Church indicated that [Black] District Superintendents directed nearly only half as many pastoral charges as the average White Methodist District Superintendent. To alleviate this situation the District Superintendents in the Central Jurisdiction would need to give special attention to training for the pastorate and lay people, rather than merely a preaching approach, so that they could oversee bigger districts. In the Central Jurisdiction, there was a necessity for more importance being placed upon teaching in the churches, especially in-service teaching and extension classes for pastors. Another modification that was seen as essential so the District Superintendents could devote their time to more oversight was

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

that the superintendent be remunerated from a central fund collected by the District or Conference Stewards.³⁶

In investigating the Central Jurisdiction, the average salary for [Black] pastors in the Central Jurisdiction of the Methodist Church was \$1,093 in 1951, resulting in a sub-standard of living, while the average annual white Methodist salary was \$2,485. The average pastor in the Central Jurisdiction served only approximately half the number of members as other Methodist pastors. An answer to this predicament, according to Felton, was to increase the size of parishes which could be effectively done by District Superintendents and Bishops, assuming they possessed sufficient trained ministers. This would also provide better salaries for Black pastors. The combination of changes in size and compensation would increase the growth rate in the Central Jurisdiction.³⁷

Felton made a case for the prerequisite of the pastor obtaining a college as well as seminary education. He contacted 306 pastors who were ordained as elders and who were asked by the ordaining bishop, "Would you devote yourself wholly to this work where unto it has pleased God to call you?" and who had responded to the question in the affirmative. In spite of the fact they accepted this call; however, it was revealed that 176 or 58 percent of the 306 were forced to resort to other employment to provide for their families. All of the 176 pastors who possessed outside jobs indicated they would have rather devoted all their time to the work of the church. It was discovered that teaching was the most effective outside service that could be rendered resolving the pastor's

³⁶ Felton, *The Ministry of the Central Jurisdiction of the Methodist Church*, 7, 9.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 12-13, 15.

financial difficulties and enhancing their ministry to their people, specifically in rural areas of the South. Only 31 percent of the 306 ministers were seminary graduates, which, was supposed to be the basic requirement for Methodist ministers at that time as well as now. The median for the 306 Methodist ministers was the junior year of college. Felton recommended Gammon Theological Seminary for training Blacks; he noted it was fully accredited by the American Association of Theological Schools. Most new Black seminary students, however, needed scholarship funds in order to attend a seminary.³⁸

Douglass W. Johnson cited the research of Dr. Ralph W. Felton in *A Study of Former Central Jurisdiction Church Data 1974-198*. Johnson also found that reasons for the anemic growth rate, especially in the South of the Central Jurisdiction, resulted from Black migration to northern cities in big numbers. Johnson makes the case that “(Black) Methodists who are migrating to the North because of racial discrimination, low incomes, poor housing, and poor schools in the South are depleting the southern churches of their leadership, but Methodism is doing little to care for these migrants after they reach the northern cities. This understanding explained the slow growth of the Central Jurisdiction. Then Johnson indicates that a more beneficial plan for dealing with White parishes that had been deserted was the conveyance of the church property to Black [Methodist] parishes rather than purchase of the facilities by Baptists or Pentecostal churches.”³⁹

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 21, 27-29, 33, 47, 49, 61.

³⁹ Douglas W. Johnson, *A Study of the Former Central Jurisdiction Church Data 1974-1984* (New York: National Program Division, General Board of Global Ministry the United Methodist Church, 1987), 4.

Johnson pointed out that when the Central Jurisdiction commenced going out of business in 1967, because the authorized behavior of Jurisdictional and Annual Conferences occurred between 1964 and 1973, the result was a merger with a White Annual Conference. He found that only then was the Temporary General Aid Fund established in 1964 to furnish funds to aid [Black] Annual Conferences to raise salaries and pensions for transferring ministers from the Central Jurisdiction. As previously stated, many Black pastors were engaged in other employment to augment their salary as a minister in the Central Jurisdiction. This arrangement was stopped when former Central Jurisdiction ministers became members of a geographic Annual Conference.⁴⁰

W.W. Fordham noted that a similar experience existed in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, especially before Regional Conferences were established, when he received a call the Southwestern Union Conference as an evangelist and secretary of the Colored Department. Upon accepting the call, Fordham indicated to W.A. Turner, union conference president: “The time has come for the equalization of the salaries for Black and White workers.” Fordham pointed out until that policy was altered, he had no plans of agreeing to that invitation. Elder Turner consented to this provision. If you receive the invitation to come and serve in the Southwestern Union Conference, your salary will be equal to the pay of White employees. When Fordham attended the first executive committee meeting at the Southwestern Union office in Fort Worth, Texas, one of the

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

agenda items was that W.W. Fordham, union conference evangelist, would have all his salary and benefits itemized the same as other workers.⁴¹

Prior to the vote, however, Elder H.G. Wells, president of the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference inquired:

Why does Brother Fordham need the equivalent salary and allowances received by the White departmental leaders? Fordham, in a careful manner spoke, Elder Wells, when I buy gasoline I must pay the White consumer's price. When I go to the market, the grocer does not say since you are Black you do not need to pay full price for your groceries. When the clerk rings up the total, I must reach into my pocket and pay the same price for food that you pay...My car costs as much as yours. My suits, my shoes, my ties have the same price tag for Blacks and Whites. Why, then, should I work for less money than my White brothers, simply because I am Black? Can you tell me that?⁴²

And of course he could not tell W.W. Fordham why he should receive less.

The difference in pay scale between Black and White pastors and workers in the SDA Church did not end until regional conferences were established in 1944/1945 because there was no pay scale difference between pastors and workers in [Black] Regional Conferences. In the Seventh-day Adventist Church pastors and workers were, and still are, paid on the same scale based on the tithe being equally distributed among the pastors and workers. So a pastor having comparable years of experience although pastoring a large church would receive no more compensation than a pastor with the same years of experience pastoring a smaller congregation. In the Methodist Church however, the pastor remuneration scale was, and still is, based on church income. A pastor of a larger church would receive much more in compensation. Bishops in the

⁴¹ Walter Fordham, *Righteous Rebel* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1999), 95.

⁴² *Ibid.*

Methodist Church are compensated much more than any pastors are. In the SDA Church however, conference presidents receive almost the same compensation as pastors of churches.⁴³

Johnson indicated that the Methodist Church established the Temporary General Aid Fund to assist [Black] Annual Conferences to lift up their salaries and pensions for transferring pastors from the [Black] Central Jurisdiction/[Black] Annual Conferences. While the Methodist Church created a temporary fund for its Black pastors, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist set up a new permanent fund called the “Regional Capital Reversion Fund.” Rather than a temporary fund as in the Methodist Church, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist voted to return funds to each union. The Regional Capital Reversion Fund would be proportional to the tithe income received by the General Conference from their unions. Twenty percent of the union conferences’ tithe received from Regional Conferences and Regional churches would be reverted back to [Black] Regional Conferences.⁴⁴

The Black-White income gap for the obtainable fifty years of data indicated median Black family income has been and continues to be about fifty seven percent of White family income. Black family income has increased markedly, but so has that of White families. The gap between Blacks and Whites appeared to remain unchanged with the

⁴³ Patricia M. Y. Chang, “Pain the Preacher: Wages and Compensation among United Methodist Clergy,” in the People(s) Called Methodist: Forms and Reforms of Their Life, 2 vols. eds., William B. Lawrence, Dennis M. Campbell, Russell E. Rickey (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), 153-160; Richard W. Schwartz and Floyd Greenleaf, *Light Bearers: A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church* revised ed. (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2000), 414, 417.

⁴⁴ Douglas W. Johnson, *A Study of Former Central Jurisdiction Church Data 1974-1984*, 4-5; “The Sixteen Points,” *The General Conference Committee on Regional Conferences and Human Relations* (April 23, 1970): 5.

majority of African Americans experiencing no improvement in housing, education, jobs, and financial benefits. In 1950, White families' median income was \$3,450, Black families' median income was \$1,870; in 1960, White families' median income was \$5,840, Black families' median income was \$3,240; and in 1970, White families' median income was \$10,240, Black families' median income was \$6,280. In 1980, White families' median income was \$21,900, Black families' median income was \$12,675; in 1990, White families' median income was \$36,900, Black families' median income was \$21,420; and in 2000, White families' median income was \$53,628, and Black families' median income was \$33,598.43. In the light of these statistics, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist "Regional Capital Reversion Fund" would help to bring some measure or degree of economic equality for [Black] Regional SDA Conferences compared with their White SDA Conference's counterparts. But, the Methodist Church and the United Methodist Church did not recognize such a permanent need for its Black pastors and churches within its organization.⁴⁵

Differences in the Perspective between the United Methodist Church and the Seventh-day Adventist Church

The difference in the viewpoints of the United Methodist Church and the Seventh-day Adventist Church in regard to ministry is quite striking. A distinction between Methodism and Adventism can be seen in the approach to young theology graduates entering ministry in the two denominations. In addition, the unique perspective became evident in organizational structural relationship in Adventism and Methodism.

⁴⁵ Richard T. Schaefer, *Racial and Ethnic Groups*, ninth edition (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc., 2004), 223.

The drive for professional training of the Adventist ministry commenced in 1892 with General Conference president O.A. Olsen. Among the basic reasons for establishing Seventh-day Adventist colleges in North America was to prepare qualified ministers, but seldom did students complete their training before being placed in the ministry. It was recognized early on that an upgrade of the ministry would demand a heavy investment of resources to produce professional programs that eventually would become an essential element of SDA higher education. A goal was to have a seminary with an Adventist situated approached that would be equal academically in excellence to the already constituted Protestant seminaries.⁴⁶

During the 1920s and 1930s, due to the shortage of professionally trained ministers, ministerial trainees opted to not complete the full four year of studies. Instead, schools provided an optional two year ministerial training course, a two-year Bible worker program, or a single year gospel worker program. The church standardized these concise programs. An internship arrangement for North America was voted on at the Spring Council of 1929. The plan provided assistance from the General Conference to the local conference where the intern would be employed. Each intern assistant had to meet certain prerequisites. Interns were commonly appointed to an evangelistic meeting, providing an ideal introduction to the ministry. Following World War II the internship provided a more rounded presentation of pastoral ministry, with interns involved in evangelism for a minimum of nine months. Additionally, the interns were exposed to practical experience in pastoral ministry in such areas as home and hospital visitation,

⁴⁶ Richard W. Schwarz and Floyd Greenleaf, *Light Bearer: A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, Revised Edition (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2000), 387-388.

counseling, youth work, management and advancement of the church and church program (Ingathering and collecting funds from the community to assist needy individuals, promoting members in sponsoring a church magazine subscription). Also, in 1956, the General Conference made it a prerequisite that in order to obtain an internship, prospective interns had to spend a minimum of one summer of full time colporteur work or colporteur literature evangelism work which was the selling of spiritual literature or books to the public. By 1964, the church leaders voted that ministerial interns should devote a minimum of two of their three years internship at the seminary to study for a Bachelor of Divinity degree (now called a Master's of Divinity degree).⁴⁷

The internship plan provided a means to resupply the church's work force by initiating a program where young theology graduates could display their call to ministry and be exposed to the various facets of ministry.⁴⁸ A comparison between what the Methodist Church and the SDA Church was doing in promoting ministry showed that there was no internship or comparable program for young theology graduates to demonstrate their call to the ministry in the Methodist Church. Whereas, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, through the General Conference had by 1929 voted a standardized internship plan for North America and for young theology graduates seeking to enter the ministry.

The establishment of predominately [Black] Regional Conferences in the Seventh-day Adventist Church was fundamentally different from how the Central Jurisdiction of the Methodist Church developed. While it is true that predominately [Black] Regional

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 390-391, 393.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 390-391.

Conferences did emerge after the Lucy Byard incident, however, it was different in that African American laymen pushed for full desegregation of the church organization. It resulted in Black SDA's being voted predominately [Black] Regional Conferences by the General Conference of SDA's comparable to the predominately [Black] Annual Conferences that had existed in the Methodist Episcopal Church after they were constituted in 1864.

Predominately [Black] Regional Conferences voted into existence in 1944 were instituted differently from the way the Central Jurisdiction was established in the Methodist Church in 1939. The first difference was that predominately [Black] Regional Conferences bore the same relationship to the organization's structure as predominately White SDA Conferences. Predominately [Black] Regional Conferences were a part of the same Seventh-day Adventist Union Conferences (union refers to a united body of conferences within a larger geographical territory; example, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, local and Wisconsin local comprise the Lake Union Conference) within the same geographical area. The [Black] Central Jurisdiction, however, was composed of nineteen [Black] Annual Conferences spread out across the United States in various geographical locations.⁴⁹

Prior to the changes that occurred from the Plan of Union uniting the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant church, [Black] Annual Conferences and White Annual Conferences had the same relationship to the governing body. The Central Jurisdiction was based solely on racial

⁴⁹ John H. Graham, *Black United Methodists: Retrospect and Prospect* (New York: Vantage Press, 1979), 90.

exclusiveness and racial segregation. Five of the Methodist Jurisdictions, the Northeastern, Southeastern, North Central, South Central, and Western were instituted geographically, not racially. The racially segregated policy of the Central Jurisdiction was adopted into the constitution of the Methodist Church. For the first time in Methodist Church history there was an authorized policy of racial segregation in large measure based on the 1896 Plessy v Ferguson decision of “separate but equal.” The proposal which came from the General Conference President Elder J. L. McElhaney at a special pre-spring Council meeting was that the [Black] Regional Conferences would have the same status and relationship as White Conferences in their various unions. Elder H.T. Elliot, associate secretary of the General Conference, was appointed to bring a report back on the operation and configuration of the Central Jurisdiction of the Methodist Church. After examining that report, it was determined that predominately [Black] Regional Conferences would be organized in the same manner as predominately White Conferences.⁵⁰

Edward Earl Cleveland: Major Actor in Church Growth and Development

Undoubtedly, no Seventh-day Adventist more incorporates evangelism than African American Edward Earl Cleveland. From the start of his ministry he was set apart by God to be a full-time public evangelist. No individual had an impact on the modern period of Adventist evangelism across the spectrum the way E.E. Cleveland has and no

⁵⁰ William B. McClain, *Black People in The Methodist Church: Whither Thou Goest?* (Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Publishing Co. 1984), 75-76; Walter Fordham, *Righteous Rebel* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1999), 76-77; Graham, *Black United Methodist: Retrospect and Prospect*, 90-91.

one has been a greater force on Black growth (evangelism) than he has been through the years. He graduated from Oakwood College in 1941 with a degree in Theology. Shortly, after graduation Cleveland willingly assented to an invitation to be a volunteer pastor in Ohio, later consenting to a call to the Carolina Conference to a district comprised of seven tiny churches. Cleveland, in his first evangelistic campaign in Asheboro, North Carolina baptized 83 new adherents on a second campaign in Fayetteville, North Carolina 84 baptisms, which portended his future. He became the conference evangelist for the newly-organized South Atlantic Conference in 1946. In 1950, he accepted an invitation to be evangelist for the Southern Union Conference. At only 34 years of age in 1954, Cleveland was one of the youngest persons ever elected to the General Conference of the SDA. He was elected associate secretary of the General Conference Ministerial Association, becoming the most influential evangelist for the world church organization for more than 23 years.⁵¹

When in 1954, Cleveland was elected associate secretary of the General Conference Ministerial Association, he was told to stop holding public evangelistic campaigns. Cleveland did not stop because he was convinced that “the best way to teach evangelism is to do it.” He has trained ministers in 67 nations, conducted hundreds of evangelism training schools and trained more than 1,300 evangelists. Cleveland had the Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist publish a “Syllabus for Evangelistic Procedures” a document distributed at training presentation and local worker’s meetings (worker’s meetings are meetings held by local conferences

⁵¹ Harold L. Lee and Monte Sahlin, *E.E. Cleveland: Evangelist Extraordinary* (Lincoln, N.B: Center for Creative Ministry, 2006), 11-12, 14-15.

to provide ministries available to workers with information helpful to carry on their ministerial responsibilities). The “Syllabus for Evangelistic Procedures” explains how to get an audience, the evangelistic nightly program, holding the audience, the visitation program (how to) get decisions (for baptism), and sermon topics and outlines of each sermon. In a manuscript published by the Ministerial Association, there were 88 sermons, plus 19 additional sermons at the back of the syllabus.⁵²

It is recognized that Cleveland laid the foundation for two significant advancements that have molded Seventh-day Adventist outreach as it progressed from the 20th century to the 21st century. Mission 73 and 74 constructed the coherent structural model that enabled the employment of satellite technical process in large-scale, multi-location evangelistic crusades. Cleveland’s emphasis on thinking big in public evangelism prepared a new group of evangelists to handle increasingly bigger numbers of people, in NET (New Evangelism Tele-seminar) in hundreds of thousands of satellite-linked sites.⁵³

After his election to the General Conference in 1954, Cleveland introduced the Century Club, a recognition plan to provide special notice of pastors or evangelists baptizing 100 people or more in a calendar year and to encourage other ministers to do likewise. Some who baptized 25 or 30 a year were now baptizing 100 or 200 a year. By 1971, more than 300 ministers were recognized as Centurions, 28 of them from the U.S. Cleveland retired from the General Conference and joined the faculty at Oakwood College in 1977 where he taught two courses each semester; Evangelism and Religious

⁵² *Ibid.*, 183, 69, 72, 75-76, 79, 111.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 65-66.

Broadcasting and Dynamics of the Christian Faith. In 1981, Cleveland developed the Annual Evangelism Council at Oakwood College, which continued as one of the most profound in-service training programs for pastors and evangelists found in the Adventist Church around the world. Nearly all [Black] Regional Conferences ministers attend and are involved in the inspiring seminars, workshops, and preaching.⁵⁴ By contrast, the United Methodists Church has no such program for its ministers or workers.

Since the 1950's the Adventist Church has been on the edge of an evangelistic explosion in growth around the world. The membership in the SDA Church was just over 750,000 members around the world, by the end of the twentieth century there were almost 12 million members. The years Cleveland pushed public evangelism indicate a pronounced up-swing until it went almost straight up. No one has done as much nor has anyone done more than E.E. Cleveland to see this occur. No one has had a greater influence on public evangelism as carried out by Adventists during this period.⁵⁵

Finally, throughout Cleveland's life-time and life work he has aggressively participated in attaining social justice and developing outreaches of compassion. He assisted in developing the Inner City Program (welfare centers for the urban poor providing food, clothing, addressing health needs) endorsed and underwritten by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. As part of his wholistic method of ministry he included a welfare program as part of each evangelistic effort. Cleveland aided in establishing an Oakwood College chapter of the NAACP. His compassion involved participating and

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 65-66.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 46-47.

having a central part in the Poor People's March that King was organizing when he was assassinated in 1968. King welcomed Cleveland as a fellow laborer for civil rights, according to the Adventist News Network.⁵⁶

Unfortunately, the [Black] Central Jurisdiction [Black] Annual Conference had no comparable individual(s) like the venerable E.E. Cleveland. The lack of such a leader may explain the anemic average growth rate of 10.22 percent in the [Black] Central Jurisdiction/[Black] Annual Conferences encountered during this 1940 to 1964 period, while [Black] Regional Conferences had a growth rate between 1946 and 1970 of 299.02 percent. The concerns of the [Black] Central Jurisdiction/ [Black] Annual Conference seem to be parochial. There is no record that any leader cast such a lengthy shadow across the American landscape in the [Black] Central Jurisdiction/ [Black] Annual Conferences of the Methodist Church as E.E. Cleveland did for the SDA Church and [Black] Regional Conferences.

Historical Overview

It is only after the Japanese attack on the U.S. Naval fleet in Pearl Harbor that the Americans became entangled in the global war. By the United States entering World War II, the joblessness of the Great Depression ended and the majority of U.S. citizens had greater prosperity than they had experienced before. The War Power Act expanded the size and scope of the federal government and it resulted in the hastening of the general trend toward largeness in business, agriculture, and labor. The size of the military greatly increased from 1.6 million in December, 1941 to 15 million men and with 350,000

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 141, 143, 147.

women in the armed forces. World War II cost America in excess of 320 billion dollars.⁵⁷

To attain total victory with smallest numbers of American casualties, Roosevelt focused on defeating Germany first. The whole course of the war was altered in the Atlantic by 24 hour and seven days a week bombing of Germany, and American science and industry combining to produce both a complex radar and sonar system. At the same time, Americans began a two-fold assault on the central Pacific and north of Australia, causing Japan to hover on the edge of defeat.⁵⁸

At home in the United States, the war provided the impetus for essential transformation of racial and social interactions and caused a renewal of America's belief in capitalism and democratic institutions. The Manhattan Project which started in late 1941, resulted in the development and use of an atomic bomb which reinforced the anything is possible spirit and it prevented an American invasion of the Japanese homeland that may have cost ten, even hundreds, of thousands of American deaths.⁵⁹

The conclusion of World War II meant the start of more favorable situations and a new age of confidence and expectation for the majority of Americans. The Servicemen's Readjustment Act (GI Bill) passed in 1944 permitted millions of returning servicemen the opportunity under the GI Bill to attend college and vocational schools and to obtain low-interest loans to purchase homes and begin businesses. The GI Bill made equality of

⁵⁷ Paul S. Boyer et al, eds., *The Enduring Vision* 6th edition (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008), 822, 797-798, 800, 822.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 803-806.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 802, 822-823.

rights, regardless of gender, available for college education, aided and abetted the baby boom and suburbanization, which undergirded and contributed to the postwar prosperity. For the first time a middle-class quality of life existed for most Americans, but not Black Americans and other minority groups. During this period, from 1945 to 1960, a confident America was seeking to guard and widen its influence and power worldwide. The U.S. endeavored to contain a Soviet Union preoccupied and concerned with its security and self-preservation.⁶⁰

Both the Cold War preoccupation with communism and the post war economic boom lessened the support for liberal reforms. President Harry Truman's Fair Deal legislation to help the disadvantaged with education, health insurance, and civil rights proved unsuccessful. Daring plans to stop discrimination and racism were frequently classified as communistic by segregationists and did not have the votes to be passed by Congress. However, the vital interest of America demanded an effort be made to reach out to non-whites in the midst of the Cold War. President Truman decided to issue an executive order to desegregate the military forces in 1948. The Democratic Convention in July of 1948 adopted a civil rights plank adopting Truman's endorsement to end segregation in education, housing, and interstate transportation. Congress passed the Taft-Harley Act which prevented closed shop [a workplace where only union members can be hired.]⁶¹

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 842-845, 848-849, 850-851.

While Eisenhower slanted to the right in his approval of private corporations, the Eisenhower administration utilized Keynesian deficit spending to halt recessions. No attempt was engaged in to hinder labor union organizing. Both the extent and range of the government increased, an example of this is creating the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.⁶²

The American landscape in the 1950's appeared to be a bastion of a contented society, but beneath the surface a state of discontent bubbled up. Racism continued unabated. Nevertheless, the Black efforts to defeat White suppression rapidly increased. The NAACP stopped asking that separate accommodations truly be equal, but argued that real equality necessitated desegregation. The first significant break in the segregation wall came with the *Brown v Board of Education* case, Topeka, Kansas on May 17, 1954. The Supreme Court ruled that separate but equal is null and void, reversing the *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling of 1896.⁶³

Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference utilized the methods of non-violent protest to organize the masses of Blacks to confront Jim Crowism. Earlier, King had led the Montgomery Improvement Association bus boycott. Mass aspect of the Civil Rights Movement began after Rosa Parks refused, on December 1, 1955, to give up her seat so a White man could sit. By the beginning of the school year in 1957, in Little Rock, Arkansas, the school board had approved a federal court order to desegregate Central High School; however, Governor Orval E. Faubus utilized the State's National Guard to prevent nine African Americans from attending the school.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 853-854.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 856.

Eisenhower was forced to federalize the Arkansas National Guard and to send federal troops to guard the nine Black students bringing the power of the executive branch behind the efforts to end segregation.⁶⁴

At the conclusion of the crusade in Montgomery, Martin Luther King, Jr. had risen to the level of fearless national leadership. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (S.C.L.C.) was the establishment of an association of civil rights organizations, community groups, and churches, a new civil rights institution that endeavored to work together collectively. The SCLC was formed and led by King in 1957, to his death in 1968. In the forefront of the SCLC from its inception was Black Methodist Joseph E. Lowery, a vice-president of SCLC and who later served as president. Lowery has been and still is a courageous and distinctive advocate for the human and civil rights movement. In Adventism, E.E. Cleveland was the official Adventist connection to SCLC.⁶⁵

On October 4, 1957, the Soviet Union launched the first artificial satellite, Sputnik. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) was created in July, 1958, by decades conclusion, the United States had launched and tested the Atlas intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM). The National Defense Education Act (1958) supplied direct federal funding to higher education, especially for the learning of the

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 857-858, 878, 885.

⁶⁵ Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, Stanley Harrold, *The African-American Odyssey* Combined Volume, 4th edition (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008), 583; Grant S. Shockley, ed., *Heritage and Hope: The African-American Presence in United Methodism* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 264-265, 281; Harold L. Lee and Monte Sahlin, E.E. Cleveland: *Evangelist Extraordinary* (Lincoln, NB: Center for Creative Ministry, 2006), 141.

sciences, mathematics, and foreign languages. The number of college students' sky rocketed from 2.5 million in 1955 to 3.6 million by 1960.⁶⁶

The John F. Kennedy style, 1961-1963, was characterized by a "can do" energy. After the lunch-counter [lunch-counter sit-in where students would remain seated until they were served food by the waiter,] sit-in, civil rights activists attempted to persuade Kennedy to act on the issue of Civil Rights. He appointed a record number of Blacks to federal positions but also nominated white segregationists to judgeships. Kennedy pledged to ban discrimination in federally supported housing by executive order; then issued a weak order that merely scratched the surface of discrimination. In response, young Black's deployed the mass direct action approach in the fight for equal rights. In 1961, "freedom rides" were organized to expose the avoidance of the 1960 Supreme Court ruling prohibiting segregation in interstate transportation facilities in the Deep South. Only after freedom riders were attacked did Kennedy act. The non-violent marches in Birmingham, which were led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., had thousands of school children participating in the efforts to challenge segregation and caused Police Commissioner Eugene "Bull" Connor to unleash his unrestrained police force to use electric cable prods, high-pressure water hoses, and attack dogs on the non-violent protestors. The savagery of Connor's assault, seen on television, shocked the United States and the world. Kennedy gave an address on television, on June 11, 1963, that described civil rights as "a moral issue." A week later, Kennedy sent a civil rights bill to Congress. Two hundred fifty thousand people, the largest political gathering to that time,

⁶⁶ Boyer, *The Enduring Vision*, 884, 882, 885.

comprising also about 50,000 Whites, gathered to March on Washington on August 28, 1963, which concluded with Martin Luther King, Jr.' "I have a Dream" speech.⁶⁷

Kennedy's assassination led to Lyndon Johnson as president, with Johnson requesting rapid passage of the civil rights bill and the tax-cut as a memorial to JFK. Johnson employed his political skills to strengthen the bill and end a southern filibuster in the Senate. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, the most consequential Civil Rights law in American history, prohibited racial discrimination and segregation in public accommodation, bias in federally funded programs, bestowed on the federal government broader authority to combat school segregation, and established the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to impose a ban on employment discrimination.⁶⁸

The Civil Rights Movement set out to win a strong voting rights law, so SCLC prepared to begin mass demonstrations in Selma, Alabama, in March, 1965. Blacks comprised about 50 percent of the population of Dallas County, where Selma was situated, yet makeup only one percent of registered voters. King knew only a crisis would cause Congress to act. He was able to provoke Selma's Sheriff Jim Clark to expose his brutality, abusing and arresting thousands of protestors. The exhibition caused nation-wide indignation and Johnson, comprehending the attitude of the nation, gave a televised speech exhorting Congress to enact a voting rights bill. In August 1965, the Voting Right Act was signed which removed the employment of any test or device to

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 892-894, 916.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 895, 901.

deny the vote and empower federal examiners to register voters in states that had disfranchised African Americans.⁶⁹

Johnson signed, into law in 1964, the Economic Opportunity Act and created the Office of Economic Opportunity to conduct an “unconditional war on poverty.” The programs involved included Job Corps. for training young people in marketable skills, Vista (Volunteers in service to America) a domestic peace corps, Project Head Start (free compensatory education for preschoolers from disadvantaged families), and the public-works and training programs. All of these projects included Johnson’s vision of the Great Society. To expand the “War on Poverty”, in 1965, the Congress enacted the Medicare (health insurance for seniors on social security) and incorporated Medicaid healthcare plans for the poor. The Great Society program was responsible for reducing the percentage of poor from 22 percent in 1960 to 13 percent in 1969; infant mortality fell by a third, and Head Start assisted 2 million disadvantaged children. The income of Black families increased from 54 percent to 61 percent of White family incomes, and the percentage of Blacks living below the poverty line declined from 40 percent to 20 percent from 1960 to 1969.⁷⁰

The Great Society agenda included passage in 1964 of a \$10 billion tax reduction bill which created a surge in capital investment and personal consumption that increased economic expansion and reduced the federal budget. The Great Society legislation advanced urban renewal, then the Immigration Act of 1965, which abolished the national-

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 895-896.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 901, 903.

origins quotas of the 1920s, and in 1964 Congress enacted the National Wilderness Preservation Act placing 9.1 million acres of wilderness aside. The outflow of liberal actions for Blacks released unfulfilled hopes which exploded into riots the first in Watts in Los Angeles in 1965, then in Chicago and Springfield, Massachusetts, and finally across the nation between 1965 and 1968. As a result of African Americans gains, in the conflict for equality, it helped to motivate other minorities and women to battle for justice. Native Americans, Hispanic-Americans, Asian-Americans, and women pushed for equality. The younger, more aggressive activists, like their Black counterparts, fell out with liberals over tactics and results.⁷¹

In 1968, the youth rebellion, the race riots, and the Tet offensive in Vietnam brought things to a head (in the Tet Offensive, the Viet Cong hit forty-one cities in South Vietnam in a military defeat for the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese but it indicated that victory was not close and around the corner in South Vietnam). In early April, Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated as he stood on a motel balcony in Memphis, Tennessee, where he had gone to provide backing for striking sanitation workers. Following his victory in the California primary in early June, Robert Kennedy was assassinated. In August, 1968, violent demonstrations on the streets outside the Democratic National Convention in Chicago aided Richard Nixon in his drive to become president.⁷²

The Student Movement and counter culture (culture very different from mainstream assumptions) assisted in urging the United States into being a more tolerant, diverse, and

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 903, 916.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 922, 926, 928, 942.

permissive society. In 1972, the United Methodist Church in a new declaration of Social Principles commended with a call for a responsible exercise of the earth's natural assets. It strongly endorsed birth control and constraints on population expansion, along with careful support of abortion and the remarriage of divorced persons. The lawful claim to engage in protest demonstrations was acknowledged. Definite support was provided for the drive for fairness in racial and social matters.⁷³

Nixon attracted White voters disturbed by civil protest and the counterculture. He stressed law and order to draw the silent majority anxious about the upswing in criminal behavior and the collapse of traditional values. Nixon adopted the political strategy of conservative columnist Kevin Phillips to divide the American people to bring about a realignment in politics and thereby establishing a new Republican majority. The "southern strategy" of the Nixon campaign sought to lure Dixie White democrats into the GOP tent by opposing court-ordered busing and by taking a hard position on campus unrest and "Black radicalism." Nixon also pursued "the southern strategy" by nominating conservatives for the Supreme Court.⁷⁴

In 1970, Nixon put a plan in place to spy on and vanquish those who were against his Vietnam policy, but in 1972 his approach began to come apart at the seams. Nixon created his own spy agency to discredit opponents and guarantee executive secrecy. The arrest of the Watergate burglars and the endeavor to hide the White House entanglement

⁷³ Boyers et al, *The Enduring Vision*, 917-918; Kenneth E. Rowe, "Holding Fast/Pressing On: 1984-1992;" John G. McEllhenney, ed., *United Methodism in America: A Compact History* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 127.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 936-937.

unveiled a number of “dirty tricks” and criminal behavior, which resulted in the indictment of almost fifty Nixon administration officials and the imprisonment of a number of Nixon associates, leading to a House Judiciary Committee vote to impeach the president. To evade certain conviction, a disgraced Nixon resigned on August 9, 1974. Gerald Ford assumed the office of president as the nation’s first president who had not been elected either president or vice-president.⁷⁵

Church Growth and Development of Membership Income and Tithe Funds

In America, Blacks and Whites recognized before the war that the United States needed to pursue a war position as a unified nation. In 1941, A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, admonished Roosevelt that discrimination against African Americans in the military and defense industries must be ended. FDR and Randolph agreed to a mutual compromise which was executive order 8802 which prohibited discrimination in employment by defense companies and federal agencies and unions. Just like the military which maintained its segregation or separate policy toward Blacks, the policy of the Methodist Church during the 1940s and 1950s even after the Truman desegregation order in 1948 mirrored that of separate as well as equal as possible. While in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1944 the organization of the first [Black] Regional Conferences was viewed as a possible first step toward racial

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 941.

equality but the 1939 decision in the Methodist Church to establish the Central Jurisdiction was an endorsement of racial segregation.⁷⁶

The outside pressure of the 1954 United States Supreme Court decision in *Brown vs Topeka* Board of Education prohibiting racial segregation in the public schools received an endorsement from the Methodist Council of Bishops the same year. Nevertheless, it was not until 1964 that an action was taken to dissolve the segregated Central Jurisdiction. Whereas, in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1962, F.L. Peterson was elected as the first African American general vice-president and officer of the General Conference. At the SDA General Conference session of 1975 there were twenty-two Blacks elected to positions in some capacity of the General Conference world-wide. Blacks in top echelon positions had increased to fifty by 1978 in the United Methodist Church. The progress in, both, the Methodist and the United Methodist Church, as well as the Seventh-day Adventist Church, coincides with the progress in the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s.⁷⁷

The growth and development of predominately [Black] Regional Conferences will be compared with the Central Jurisdiction/[Black] Annual Conferences in the United Methodist Church during the period 1940 to 1964 when [Black] Annual Conferences were being eliminated. In addition [Black] Regional Conferences, 1946 to 2001 will be compared with predominately White SDA Conferences from 1946 to 2001.

⁷⁶ Grant S. Shockley, ed., *Heritage and Hope: The African American Presence in United Methodism* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 144-145; Fordham, *Righteous Rebel*, 82.

⁷⁷ Shockley, *Heritage and Hope*, 147; Fordham, *Righteous Rebel*, 82-83.

The Central Jurisdiction in the United Methodist Church will be examined from the first General Conference of the United Methodist Church in 1940 in terms of membership growth. The United Methodist Church's Central Jurisdiction membership figure at the General Conference of 1940 was 338,724. This membership figure will be compared with all the figures for [Black] Regional Conferences after their inception in 1944/1945. Only three [Black] Regional Conferences were established in 1945, Lake Region Conference was the first established, followed by Allegheny Conference, and then Northeastern Conference. The membership of all three conferences was accordingly Lake Region's membership, 2,517, Allegheny Conference membership, 4,047, and Northeastern membership, 2,468. The total Black membership in those conferences was 9,032. In 1946, two other conferences were added to the mix; South Atlantic Conference with a membership of 3,964 and South Central Conference with a membership of 2,456 members. By the end of 1946 the above named conferences had a total membership of 15,876. Two additional [Black] Regional Conferences joined the five original [Black] Regional Conferences to supplement their growth. Table 1 lists the growth and development of the [Black] Central Jurisdiction and [Black] Regional Conferences from the dates specified in this study. The [Black] Central Jurisdiction [Black] Annual Conferences commenced its dissolution before the 1968 General Conference and was absorbed into various White conferences, such as the Delaware, Washington, Lexington and the Central West Conferences of the Central Jurisdiction by 1964.

In order to calculate the growth and development of membership and income and/or Tithe Funds of the [Black] Central Jurisdiction, [Black] Regional Conferences, and White SDA Conferences the percentage change formula was employed. The percentage change formula $\frac{(y^2 - y^1)}{Y^1} \times 100$ equal percentage change. In the percentage change formula y^1 is the first value and y^2 is the second value. The percentage change formula will be utilized to compute the percentages in the various tables of this research study.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Percentage Change, "Percentage Change Calculator;" available from www.percentage-change.com; Internet; accessed 13 May 2009.

Table 1

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF MEMBERSHIP

[BLACK] CENTRAL JURISDICTION				[BLACK] REGIONAL CONFERENCE		
Years of growth in 4 yr. increments	Membership growth increase (+) Decrease (-)	Growth percentage increase (+) Decrease (-)		Years of growth in 4 yr. increments	Membership growth increase (+) Decrease (-)	Growth percentage increase (+) Decrease (-)
1940	338,724			1946	15,876	
1944	347,087 8,363+	2.47%+		1950	20,352+ 4,476+	28.19%+
1948	339,779 7,308-	2.10%-		1954	28,394+ 8,042+	39.51%+
1952	347,053 7,274+	2.14%+		1958	34,742+ 6,348+	22.36%+
1956	352,972 5,919+	1.71%+		1962	40,652+ 5,910+	17.01%+
1960	367,340 14,368+	4.07%+		1966	51,280+ 10,628+	26.14%+
1964	373,327 5,987+	1.63%+ ⁷⁹		1970	63,349+ 12,069+	23.53%+ ⁸⁰

The first table shows a profound contrast between the growth and development membership rate of the [Black] Central Jurisdiction and of [Black] Regional Conferences. While the period covered for the [Black] Central Jurisdiction is different 1940 to 1964 versus the [Black] Regional Conferences 1946 to 1970, the number of years are the same: 24 years for each, (The Central Jurisdiction commenced to be dissolved after 1964 instead of 1968). The years covered in both are increment of four years with both the

⁷⁹ *General Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Church*, Statistical Office, Albert C. Hoover, Statistical Director (Chicago: The Methodist Publishing House, 1940), 399; *General Minutes of Annual Conferences*, 1944, 317; *General Minutes*, 1948, 605; *General Minutes* 1952, 580; *General Minutes* 1956, 617; *General Minutes*, Warren Irvin, Statistical Director, 1960, 680; *General Minutes*, Douglas Crozier, Statistical Director, 1964, 873.

⁸⁰ *Statistical Report of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, Claude Conard, Statistical Secretary (Tacoma Park, Washington, D.C. *General Conference of SDA Church*, 1946), 6; *Statistical Report*, Statistical Secretary, E. J. Johanson, 1950, 6; *Statistical Report*, Statistical Secretary, H.W. KLASER, 1954, 1958, 1962, 6; *Statistical Report*, Statistical Secretary, R.J. Radcliffe, 1966, 6; *Statistical Report*, Statistical Secretary, Jesse O. Gibson, 1970, 6.

[Black] Central Jurisdiction and [Black] Regional Conferences being compared with the years when each held its General Conference every four years.

The [Black] Central Jurisdiction 1940 General Conference of the Methodist growth and development membership figure of 338,724 when subtracted from the 1944 General Conference membership figure of 347,087 showed a membership growth figure of 8,363, an increase of 2.47 percent. While in the [Black] Regional Conferences, the 1946 General Conference growth and development membership figure of 15,876 is subtracted from the 1950 General Conference membership figure of 20,352 which showed a membership growth figure of 4,476, an increase of 28.19 percent. Utilizing the beginning 1940 [Black] Central Jurisdiction of Methodist General Conference membership figure of 338,724 and subtracting it from the 1964 General Conference membership growth figure of 373,327 leaves an overall membership growth figure of 34,603 or an increased [Black] Central Jurisdiction growth percentage of 10.22 percent.

Using the 1946 [Black] Regional Conferences SDA General Conference membership figure of 15,876 and subtracting it from the 1970 SDA General Conference [Black] Regional Conference membership growth figure of 63,349 provides an overall membership growth figure of 47,473 or a [Black] Regional Conference growth percentage of 299.02 percent.

Table 2

INCOME AND TITHE FUNDS

[BLACK] CENTRAL JURISDICTION				[BLACK] REGIONAL CONFERENCE		
Years of income funds in 4 yr. increments	Income funds increase (+) decrease (-)	Income funds Percentage increase (+) decrease (-)		Years of tithing in 4 yr. increments	Tithe increase (+) Decrease (-)	Tithe percentage increase (+) decrease (-)
1940	2,872,211			1946	786,421	
1944	3,369,500+ 497,289+	17.31%		1950	1,195,638+ 409,217+	52.04%
1948	5,142,760+ 1,773,260+	52.63%		1954	1,691,681+ 496,043+	41.49%
1952	6,646,623+ 1,503,863+	29.24%		1958	2,355,564+ 663,883+	39.24%
1956	7,969,517+ 1,322,894+	19.90%		1962	3,233,583+ 878,019+	37.24%
1960	10,010,902+ 2,041,385+	25.61%		1966	4,631,791+ 1,398,208+	43.24%
1964	11,785,151+ 1,774,249+	17.72% ⁸¹		1970	8,044,652+ 3,412,861+	73.68% ⁸²

The statistical data shows the [Black] SDA Regional Conferences membership growth rate of 299.02 percent versus a [Black] Central Jurisdiction/[Black] Annual Conferences growth rate of 10.22 percent. The [Black] SDA Regional Conferences membership growth rate was 29 times the [Black] Central Jurisdiction/[Black] Annual Conferences membership growth rate for a twenty-four year period.

⁸¹ *General Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Church Statistical Office*, Albert C. Hoover, Statistical Director (Chicago: The Methodist Publishing House, 1940), 399; *General Minutes of Annual Conferences*, 1944, 318; *General Minutes*, 1948, 606; *General Minutes*, 1952, 582; *General Minutes*, 1956, 618; *General Minutes*, Warren Irvin, Statistical Director, 1960, 680; *General Minutes*, Douglas Crozier, Statistical Director, 1964, 873.

⁸² *Statistical Report of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, Claude Conard, Statistical Secretary (Tacoma Park, Washington, D.C. General Conference of SDA, 1946), 6; *Statistical Report*, Statistical Secretary, E. J. Johanson, 1950, 6; *Statistical Report*, Statistical Secretary, H.W. Klander, 1954, 1958, 1962, 6; *Statistical Report*, Statistical Secretary, R.J. Radcliffe, 1966, 6; *Statistical Report*, Statistical Secretary, Jesse O. Gibson, 1970, 6.

The second table deals with Income and/or Tithe Funds for the [Black] Central Jurisdiction, 1940-1964 versus the [Black] Regional Conferences, 1946 to 1970, for both four year increments when each held its General Conferences, covering a period of 24 years. The [Black] Central Jurisdiction, 1940, General Conference of the Methodist total income funds figure of \$2,872,211 is subtracted from the 1944 income funds figure of \$3,369,500 which revealed a total income figure of a positive \$497,289, an increase of 17.31 percent. While in the [Black] Regional Conference, 1946 General Conference of SDA tithe funds figure of \$786,421 is subtracted from the 1950 tithe funds figure of \$1,195,638 which leaves a total tithe figure \$409,217, an increase of 52.04 percent. Employing 1940 as a starting point for the [Black] Central Jurisdiction of the Methodist General Conference Income Funds figure of 2,872,211 subtracted from the 1964 General Conference Income Fund figure of \$11,785,151 there remains an overall Income Fund figure of \$8,912,940 or a [Black] Central Jurisdiction Income Fund percentage of 310.31 percent. Applying the 1946 [Black] Regional Conference SDA General Conference tithe fund figure of \$786,421 and subtracting the figure from the 1970 SDA General Conference tithe figure of \$8,044,652 supplying a total tithe fund figure of \$7,258,231 or a [Black] Regional Conference tithe percentage increase of 922.94 percent. [Black] Central Jurisdiction/Black Annual Conferences of the Methodist Church from 1940 to 1964 increased by 310.31 percent. The [Black] SDA Regional Conference tithe fund increased by 922.94 percent and the [Black] Central Jurisdiction Annual Conference Income Fund increased by 310.31 percent. [Black] SDA Regional Conferences tithe

fund increased by nearly three times the Methodist [Black] Central Jurisdiction [Black] Annual Conferences Income Fund during a similar twenty-four year period.

Historical Overview

During his short presidency Gerald Ford recommended volunteerist strategies in combating inflation. President Jimmy Carter formed strategies to deal with the energy crisis, environmental hazards, and other emerging issues. Carter and Congress combated the recession with a tax cut and a limited public works program and the unemployment rate was reduced to about 5 percent by 1978. In the later part of 1980, as his term ended, Carter signed legislation established a federal “Superfund” to clean up the nation’s most polluted industry. Carter established a new Department of Energy.⁸³

Resisting abortion, gay rights, social-welfare programs, secular cultural trends, conservatives organized politically, laid the foundation for Ronald Reagan’s electoral win. Industrial downturns; oil price hikes, and inflation caused serious economic difficulties through most of the 1970s. The 1980s, regardless of the recession and a stock market downturn, saw a five year boom that brought prosperity to some. However, a persistent trade gap, tremendous federal deficit connected to Reagan’s tax cuts, and a continued reduction of factory employment showed danger for the future. Replaced industrial workers and inner-city minorities were striving in a high-tech market that required complex training and professional proficiency. A number of African Americans experienced upward mobility, but many remained in poverty. Native Americans confronted persistent deprivation, but new economic opportunities and advantages were

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 957-960.

received from long-forsaken treaty privileges greatly assisted them. Immigration from Latin America and Asia remolded the country's ethnic sketch.⁸⁴

Ronald Reagan commenced his presidency in 1981 as the champion of conservative cultural values that a large segment saw as endangered. Utilizing the southern strategy, Reagan won all the southern states but Carter's Georgia and won every state west of the Mississippi, but Minnesota and Hawaii, and won more than half the white, blue-collar workers, with Black voters still staying democratic. Jerry Falwell and the pro-Reagan moral majority registered 2 million new voters in 1980 and 1984. Reagan was a proponent of self-help and private initiative and stressing free enterprise and his rejection of social-welfare programs resonated with white middle class and blue-collar voters. Like Franklin Roosevelt, his one time political hero, Reagan promised the voters a new deal, but his new deal involved a large tax cut, a smaller government bureaucracy, along with military might and aggressive anticommunist words and deeds.⁸⁵

Yielding to the stress exerted from conservative Methodists and others, the 1984 United Methodist General Conference modified the 1972 Social Principles declaration to show that The United Methodist Church regarded "abortion on demands" ethically bad. Revised, the Social Principles persisted in recognizing the "tragic conflicts of life with life that may justify abortion" and expressed backing for the "legal option of abortion under proper medical procedures."⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Boyer, et als., *The Enduring Vision*, 978.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 961.

⁸⁶ Rowe, *United Methodism in America: A Compact History*, 145.

Reagan's economic program, referred to as Reaganomics by the media, rested on the concept that U.S. capitalism, if freed from heavy taxes and regulation, would attain amazing productivity. In his first budget Reagan offered a 30 percent cut in federal income taxes involving a three year period. Congress adopted a 25 percent tax cut: 5 percent in 1981 and 10 percent in 1982 and 1983. To offset the revenue reduction, Reagan offered cuts in various programs like school lunches, student loans, job training, and urban mass transit. Congress cut more than \$40 billion in domestic programs, but not as much as Reagan had proposed.⁸⁷

Economists indicated that the tax cuts would create enormous federal deficits; however, Reagan asserted that lower taxes would foster economic growth, increasing tax income. Reaganomics also included decreased government regulation of businesses. Under Reagan the Federal Communication Commission decreased federal rules over the broadcast industry, while the secretary of transportation, eliminated rules directed at reducing air pollution and improving vehicle safety and economy. The Federal Reserve Board, to wring out inflation, drove interest rates higher, and this distasteful medicine combined with a reduction in the cost of oil, achieved its objective, but high U.S. interest rates caused foreign investors to purchase dollars to receive high interest payments, the dollar increase in value opposite foreign currencies, causing more expensive U.S. exports to fall, while imports went up with the U.S. trade deficit, exceeding 111 billion in 1984.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 962.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 962-963.

The economy remained on a tenuous footing through 1982; Reagan seemed to be poised for failure. In the 1982 mid-term contest, the Democrats recovered twenty six House seats. However, 1983 saw the economy take an upswing. Emboldened by a reduction in taxes, declining interest rates, improved employment figures, and indications that inflation had abated, U.S. consumers began shopping sprees and the flourishing stock market conjured up endless business prosperities that lasted until October 19, 1987, when the stock market plummeted, reducing stock values by 20 percent overnight. Quick government action relaxing credit helped the market to stabilize. In the midst of the bull market, the trade deficit increased to more than \$200 billion in 1986. For a large number of farmers, the inner-city poor, recent immigrants and dislodged industrial employees, all experienced pain during these so-called prosperous times.⁸⁹

Reagan asserted that after Vietnam, America had become perilously feeble, so he commenced an extensive military program enlargement. The budget for the military almost doubled, by 1985. It was in excess of \$300 billion. Reagan, in March, 1983, offered the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), a high tech anti-missile system, using space-based lasers. The plan was referred to by skeptics as ‘star wars’ and specialists in the field cautioned regarding the tremendous scientific barriers to be overcome.⁹⁰ The United Methodist Council of Bishops, in 1986, published a powerful pastoral message

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 963-964.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 966-967.

concerning peace. The message entitled, *In Defense of Creation: The Nuclear Crisis and a Just Peace*, was strongly worded against nuclear war on a religious basis.⁹¹

Reagan's second term saw several legislative attainments, among them the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act and a tax reform act that removed 6 million low income Americans from paying income taxes. The Federal budget deficits, a result of the Reagan tax cuts and expansive military outlays exceeded \$200 billion in 1985 and 1986, and continued at around \$150 billion for the subsequent two years. These, along with the gaping trade deficit and a savings and loan industry outrage connected with deregulation, were Reagan's primary economic heritage.⁹² George Bush's election as president in 1988 was significant. He was the first vice-president elected from the vice-president position since Van Buren in 1836. As president, Bush accumulated a mixed record.⁹³

On the domestic front, funds obtained due to the Reagan tax breaks invested in Savings and Loans (S & L) were placed in S & L with their high rates of interest. Congress relaxed the regulation of S & L's, permitting them to participate in speculative real estate investments. The recession occurred and a lot of ventures failed. From 1988 to 1990, about 600 S & L's went bankrupt, resulting in a lot of depositors with government deposit insurance being repaid. The total government S & L rescue outlay was \$400 billion. At the same time, the federal deficit, a result of Reagan's tax cuts and military expenditures persisted to increase. In 1990, Bush and Congress settled a deficit-reduction plan including reducing spending and tax increases. Even with the accords, the

⁹¹ Rowe, *United Methodism in America: A Compact History*, 152.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 968.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 979.

deficit soared to \$290 billion in 1992. A recession occurred in 1990, with retail sales declining, house starts plummeting, by 1992, the unemployment rate was more than 7 percent and the number of Americans existing in poverty had grown by 2.1 million, to around 34 million.⁹⁴

William Jefferson (Bill) Clinton was the first president from the baby boom generation. In the 1992 congressional elections, thirty-eight African Americans and seventeen Hispanics were elected. California was the first state to elect two women senators, Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein. Illinois elected the first African American woman senator, Carol Mosely Braun. The new Congress was comprised of fifty three women; six in the Senate and forty-seven in the House.⁹⁵

Even with the Democrats in control of the Congress, legislation only barely passed due to intense opposition. In August, 1993, Congress voted in Clinton's program to cut military expenditures and raise taxes to reduce the budget deficit. In 1993, Congress passed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and forecast by the majority of economists that an overall increase in employment would result from NAFTA allowing access of U.S. products in its markets. A health care task force was formed to address the health care problems, but by the fall of 1994, health care reform was at a standstill. In 1994, Clinton offered an anti-crime bill which was comprised of a ban on assault weapons and funds for more prison and police officers. It was not until 1995,

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 980.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 982-983.

when the Republicans controlled Congress that the crime bill passed.⁹⁶ In 1994, the jobless rate had declined to the lowest it had been in four years, inflation stayed in check. The federal budget deficit declined every year from 1993 to 1997. By the middle of 1994, however, Clinton's job approval rate had fallen to 42 percent. In November, 1994, voters signed up for the Contract with America by putting the Republicans in control of both houses of Congress for the first time since 1954.⁹⁷

In August, 1996, after vetoing two welfare bills that failed to have the protections Clinton thought they needed, he signed the historic Welfare Reform Act of 1996. The Act was a turnabout in the sixty years of welfare politics; the law abolished the biggest federal welfare program, Aid to Families, Women and Children. Rather, states would be issued block grants to create their own programs within the confines of funding constraints and guidelines restricting most recipients to two years of constant coverage, with a five year life-time limit. Looking at the statistics from 1996 to 2005, the number of families on welfare declined by 57 percent, and the birth rate involving unmarried women flattened out. Unmarried mothers in the job market increased from about 48 percent in 1996 to approximately 65 percent in 2000.⁹⁸

The 1990s saw the lengthiest sustained period of economic expansion in U.S. history. Joblessness declined, productivity rose, and inflation stayed down. An economic boom aided in a decrease in the crime rate and a decline in welfare participants.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 984-985.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 985-986.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 987.

Federal deficits fell as tax funds rose. For the first time since 1969, in 1998, the federal budget had a surplus. The upswing resulted from increased international trade, a low inflation rate, and the Federal Reserve Board policy of low interest rates which aided in the economic prosperity. For example, unemployment, which was 7.5 percent in 1992, declined to 4 percent in 2000. The Gross National Product (GNP) increased almost 80 percent in the 1990s, while corporate profits skyrocketed. On Wall Street, stock market prices outstripped many corporations' real value or earnings possibilities.⁹⁹

Finally, the political and cultural wars of the latter part of the 1990s were strengthened with the political organization of conservative Christian evangelicals; by opposing views regarding highly charged concerns such as abortion and homosexuality. Clinton's own lack of discretion, while attempting to hide an embarrassing sex scandal, then resulted in his impeachment by a tremendously biased House of Representatives. He avoided removal from office, but his reputation was tarnished. The 1990s closed with outbreaks of violence, from school shootings to the disastrous bombing in Oklahoma City, combined with a deep cultural chasm and a venomous political atmosphere.¹⁰⁰

[Black] SDA Regional Conferences Compared With White SDA Conferences

[Black] SDA Regional Conferences such as Allegheny East Conference, Allegheny West Conference, Central States Conferences, Lake Region Conference, Northeastern Conference, South Atlantic Conference, Southeastern Conference, and Southwest Region Conference are being compared only with White SDA Conferences in the various union

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 987-988.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 1006.

conferences (a united body of conferences within a designated geographical territory) where they existed. So that only unions, where [Black] Regional Conferences are in existence, are being compared to the other conferences in the unions and all the unions' growth and development of membership. The tithe funds increases or decreases are compared by adding the White Conferences together and by subtracting the [Black] SDA Regional Conferences tithe funds'. The White SDA Conferences growth and development membership figures, as well as the tithe funds for the Atlantic Union, Columbia Union, Lake Union, Mid-America Union (formerly Known as the Central Union), Southern Union, and the Southwestern Union Conferences are added together minus the growth and development figures and the tithe funds figures for the [Black] SDA Regional Conferences.

Table 3

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF MEMBERSHIP¹⁰¹

[BLACK] SDA REGIONAL CONFERENCE				White SDA CONFERENCE		
Years of growth in 4 yr. increments	Membership growth increase (+) Decrease (-)	Growth percentage increase (+) Decrease (-)		Years of growth in 4 yr. increments	Membership growth increase (+) Decrease (-)	Growth percentage increase (+) Decrease (-)
1946	15,876+			1946	78,725	
1950	20,352+ 4,476+	28.19%+		1950	119,806 41,081	52.18%+
1954	28,394+ 8,042+	39.51%+		1954	135,259 15,453	12.90%+
1958	34,742+ 6,348+	22.36%+		1958	148,313 13,054	9.65%+
1962	40,652+ 5,910+	17.01%+		1962	159,259 10,946	7.38%+
1966	51,280+ 10,628+	26.14%+		1966	170,559 11,300	7.10%+
1970	63,348+ 12,068+	23.53%+		1970	188,144 17,585	10.31%+

The third table shows the period covered for both [Black] SDA Regional Conferences and White SDA Conferences is the same for 1946 to 1970, in four year increments. The [Black] SDA Regional Conferences 1946 General Conference growth and development membership figure of 15,876, where it is subtracted from the 1950 General Conference membership figure of 20,352, displayed a membership growth figure of 4,476, an increased growth percentage of 28.19 percent. The White SDA Conferences 1946 General Conference membership figure of 119,806 revealed a membership growth figure of 41,081, an increase of 52.18%. Using the [Black] SDA General Conference membership figure of 15,876 and subtracting it from the 1970 membership growth figure

¹⁰¹ *Statistical Report of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, Claude Conard, Statistical Secretary (Tacoma Park, Washington, D.C. *General Conference of SDA Church*, 1946), 6; *Statistical Report*, Statistical Secretary, E. J. Johanson, 1950, 6; *Statistical Report*, Statistical Secretary, H.W. Klaser, 1954, 1958, 1962, 6; *Statistical Report*, Statistical Secretary, R.J. Radcliffe, 1966, 6; *Statistical Report*, Statistical Secretary, Jesse O. Gibson, 1970, 6.

of 63,349 furnishes a total membership growth figure of 47,473 or a [Black] Regional Conference growth percentage of 299.02 percent. Making use of the 1946 White SDA Conference membership figure of 78,725 and subtracting it from the 1970 SDA General Conference membership growth of 188,144 gives a complete membership growth figure of 109,419 or a White SDA Conference growth percentage of 138.99 percent. The [Black] Regional Conferences membership growth rate is 299.02 percent are compared for the years 1936 to 1970. The [Black] SDA Regional Conferences membership growth rate was 2.15 times the White SDA growth rate from 1946 to 1970.

Table 4

TITHE FUNDS¹⁰²

[BLACK] SDA REGIONAL CONFERENCE				White SDA CONFERENCE		
Tithing in 4 yr. increments	Tithe increase (+) Decrease (-)	Tithe percentage increase (+) Decrease (-)		Tithing in 4 yr. increments	Tithe increase (+) Decrease (-)	Tithe increase (+) Decrease (-)
1946	786,421+			1946	5,993,793	
1950	1,195,638+ 409,217+	52.04%+		1950	8,880,990+ 2,857,197+	48.17%+
1954	1,691,681+ 496,043+	41.49%+		1954	13,925,568+ 5,044,578+	56.80%+
1958	2,355,564+ 663,883+	39.24%+		1958	18,134,568+ 4,209,000+	30.22%+
1962	3,233,583+ 878,019+	37.24%+		1962	22,543,664+ 4,409,096+	24.31%+
1966	4,631,791+ 1,398,208+	43.24%+		1966	30,847,069+ 8,303,405+	36.83%+
1970	8,044,652+ 3,412,861+	73.68%+		1970	34,501,348+ 3,654,279+	11.85%+

The fourth table handles the time frame 1946 to 1970 and involves the tithe funds in both the [Black] SDA Regional Conferences and White SDA Conferences in four year increments. [Black] Regional Conferences had a 1946 General Conference of SDA tithe funds figure of \$786,421 then after subtracting from the 1950 tithe funds figure of \$1,195,638 leaving an overall tithe fund figure of \$409,217, an increase of 52.04 percent. Moreover, the White SDA Conferences had a 1946 General Conference tithe fund figure of \$5,993,793 following the subtraction from the 1950 tithe fund figure of \$8,850,990 giving an overall tithe fund figure of \$2,857,197 or an increase of 48.17 percent.

Utilizing the 1946 White SDA Conferences General Conference funds figure of

¹⁰² *Statistical Report of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, Claude Conard, Statistical Secretary (Tacoma Park, Washington, D.C. *General Conference of SDA Church*, 1946), 6; *Statistical Report*, Statistical Secretary, E. J. Johanson, 1950, 6; *Statistical Report*, Statistical Secretary, H.W. Klaser, 1954, 1958, 1962, 6; *Statistical Report*, Statistical Secretary, R.J. Radcliffe, 1966, 6; *Statistical Report*, Statistical Secretary, Jesse O. Gibson, 1970, 6.

\$5,993,793 and subtracting the tithe funds figure from the 1970 SDA General Conference tithe funds figure of \$34,501,348 indicates a complete tithe fund figure of 28,507,555 or an increase of 475.62 percentage. Taking, as the starting point, the 1946 [Black] Regional Conferences SDA tithe funds figure of \$786,421 subtracting it from the 1970 tithe fund figure of \$8,044,144, the remaining tithe fund figure \$7,258,231 or a [Black] SDA Regional Conference tithe percentage increase of 922.94 percent. The [Black] SDA Regional Conferences tithe fund increased by 922.94 percent and the White SDA Conferences tithe fund increased by 475.62 percent from 1946 to 1970. In this study, the [Black] Regional Conferences 1946 to 1970 tithe funds growth rate is 1.94 times or nearly two times the White SDA Conferences tithe fund growth rate.

Table 5

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF MEMBERSHIP¹⁰³

[BLACK] SDA REGIONAL CONFERENCE				White SDA CONFERENCE		
Membership Growth 5 yr. increments	Membership Growth (+) Decrease (-)	Membership Growth percentage increase (+) Decrease (-)		Membership Growth 5 yr. increments	Membership Growth increase (+) Decrease (-)	Membership Growth Percentage increase (+) Decrease (-)
1975	86,057			1975	217,075	
1980	112,137+ 26,080+	30.31%+		1980	260,106+ 43,031+	19.82%+
1985	141,744+ 29,607+	26.40%+		1985	285,137+ 25,031+	9.62%+
1990	165,645+ 23,901+	16.86%+		1990	303,550+ 18,413+	6.46%+
1995	196,983+ 31,338+	18.92%+		1995	332,650+ 29,100+	9.59%+
2000	225,067+ 28,084+	14.26%+		2000	369,871+ 37,221+	11.19%+

The fifth table deals with growth and development of Black] SDA Regional Conferences and White SDA Conferences from 1975 to 2000 in five year increments. [Black] SDA Regional Conferences 1975 General Conference growth and development membership figure of 86,057 when subtracted from the 1980 General Conference membership figure of 112,137 depicted a membership growth figure of 26,080, an increase growth percentage of 30.31 percent. At the same time, the White SDA Conferences 1975 General Conference growth and development membership figure of 218,075 subtracted from the 1980 General Conference membership figure of 260,106 represents a membership growth figure of 42,031 and increase of 19.27 percent. Therefore, if we utilize the [Black] SDA Regional Conferences and the beginning 1975

¹⁰³ *Statistical Report of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, F. Donald Yost, Director, Office of Archives and Statistics (Washington, D.C.: *General Conference of SDA Church*, 1946), 6; *Statistical Report*, 1975, 6; *Statistical Report*, 1980, 14; *Statistical Report*, 1985, 14; *Statistical Report*, 1990, 16, 18; *Statistical Report*, 1995, 20, 22; *Statistical Report*, 2000, 20, 22.

General Conference growth and development membership figure of 86,057 and subtract it from the 2000 SDA General Conference [Black] Regional Conferences membership figure of 225,067 gives us a membership growth figure of 139,010 and [Black] Regional Conferences growth percentage of 161.53 percent. Employing the 2000 White SDA Conferences membership figure of 217,025 subtracted from the 2000 General Conference membership figure of 369,871 provides the membership growth figure of 151,796 an increase growth percentage of 69.61 percent. The [Black] SDA Regional Conferences membership growth rate increased by 161.53 percent and the White SDA Conferences membership growth rate increased by 69.61 percent and the White membership growth rate increase was attributable to growth in membership from Hispanics, Asians and other minorities. The [Black] SDA Regional Conferences membership growth rate was 2.32 times the White SDA Conferences growth rate from 1975 to 2000.

Table 6

TITHE FUNDS¹⁰⁴

[BLACK] SDA REGIONAL CONFERENCE				White SDA CONFERENCE		
Tithing in 4 yr. increments	Tithe increase (+) Decrease (-)	Tithe percentage increase (+) Decrease (-)		Tithing in 4 yr. increments	Tithe increase (+) Decrease (-)	Tithe increase (+) Decrease (-)
1975	14,569,312			1975	68,775,194	
1980	24,837,537+	70.48%+		1980	113,172,344+	64.55%+
	10,268,225+				44,397,150+	
1985	40,184,703+	61.79%+		1985	148,578,498+	31.29%+
	15,347,166+				35,406,154+	
1990	57,813,052+	43.87%+		1990	184,595,539+	24.24%+
	17,628,349+				36,017,041+	
1995	78,724,404+	36.17%+		1995	230,495,561+	25.87%+
	20,911,352+				445,900,022+	
2000	114,491,941+	45.43%+		2000	376,981,006+	63.55%+
	35,767,537+				146,485,445+	

The sixth table shows the funds during the period 1975 to 2000 in five year increments for [Black] SDA Regional Conference and White SDA Conferences. [Black] Regional SDA Conferences in 1975 contained a General Conference of SDA tithe funds figure of \$14,569,312 which following the subtraction from the 1980 tithe funds figure of \$24,837,537, there remained a tithe fund figure of \$10,268,225 an increase of 70.48 percent. The White SDA Conferences had a 1975 General Conference tithe fund figure of 68,775,194 following the subtraction from the 1980 tithe fund figure of \$113,172,344, leaving an overall tithe fund figure of \$44,397,150, an increase of 64.55 percent. Making use of the 1975 White SDA Conference General Conference tithe fund figure of \$68,775,194 and subtracting the 2000 tithe fund figure of \$376,981,006 provides a total

¹⁰⁴ *Statistical Report of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, F. Donald Yost, Director, Office of Archives and Statistics (Washington, D.C.: *General Conference of SDA Church*, 1975), 6; *Statistical Report*, 1989, 14; *Statistical Report*, 1985, 16; *Statistical Report*, 1990, 16, 18; *Statistical Report*, 1995, 20, 22; *Statistical Report*, 2000, 19, 21.

tithe fund figure of \$308,205,812 an increase of 448.14 percent. As a reference point the 1975 [Black] SDA Regional Conference tithe fund figure of \$14,569,312 and subtracting it from the 2000 tithe fund figure furnishing a total tithe fund figure of \$99,922,629 or an increase of 685.84 percent. The [Black] SDA Regional Conferences tithe fund increased by 685.84 percent and the White SDA Conferences tithe fund increased by 448.14 percent from 1975 to 2000. The [Black] Regional Conferences tithe fund increased at 1.53 times the White SDA Conferences tithe fund from 1975 to 2000.

New [Black] Regional Conferences Retirement Compared With North American Division White Conferences Retirement

The initial Regional (involves only Regional Conferences' Presidents) President's Caucus meeting was a telephone conference call April 17, 1998 at 10:30 pomp, (EST) which was to invite David W, Powell of Green and Nordberg to make a presentation to the regional presidents on Friday April 10, 1998. The focus of Powell's presentation would be an Alternative Retirement Program for Regional Conferences. Mutual of America is the fund voted to be considered at the meeting of the Regional Black Administrative Caucus involving (the President, Secretary, and Treasurer of the Regional Conferences) which occurred on July 17, 2000 at the South Central Conference office building, Nashville, Tennessee.¹⁰⁵

One individual had been the driving force and architect behind the concept of the North American Division Regional Conference Retirement Plan, Joseph W, McCoy. At the December 5, 2000 Regional Conference President's Council Meeting at the Office for

¹⁰⁵ Regional President's Caucus, *Minutes* (April 7, 1998), 1; *Black Administrative Caucus*, Alternative Retirement Plan Meeting, *Minutes*, South Central Conference Office Building, Nashville, TN, (July 17, 2000), 1, 7.

Regional Conference Ministry on Oakwood University (formerly College) Campus on December 5, 2000. Following a great deal of discussion, eight Regional Conference Presidents voted to adopt the plan to begin the new retirement plan effective January 1, 2000 (they went back and grandfathered it in, in 2000). This historic day resulted as the original eight conferences (Northeastern Conference later joined them) signed the agreement to commence the new Regional Conferences Retirement Plan with Mutual of America Retirement Systems. The Regional Conferences voted to take this action because on January 1, 2000, the North American Division (a section of the General Conference of SDA embracing local or union conferences in large areas of the world field) voted to change from a defined benefit plan (funded totally by the organization) to a defined contribution plan (where workers contribute 4% of yearly salary and local conference pay into a fund for employees). The Regional Conferences Retirement Plan is a Defined Benefit Plan paid for totally by the employing Regional Conferences.¹⁰⁶

January 29, 2001, at the Regional Retirement Board Meeting Loma Linda, California, the Retirement Board voted Joseph W, McCoy to be Chairman of the Board. At the North American Division Regional Conference Officer's Council on April 12, 2001, it was voted to select Joseph W, McCoy, Chairman of the Regional Conference Retirement Plan Investment Committee with the authority to sign all contracts and documents with Mutual of America. Joseph W. McCoy was selected as the

¹⁰⁶ North American Division Black Conference President Council, *Minutes*, Regional Conference Office, Huntsville, Alabama (December 5, 2000), 2.

representative of the Regional Conferences Retirement Plan to negotiate with Mutual of America in the investment of all plan funds.¹⁰⁷

Furthermore, a report of the North American Division equity committee conducted on April 9, 2001 of the actuarial report indicated of the top thirteen conferences paying into the North American Division Retirement Plan, the Regional Conferences were all in the top category. Some Regional Conferences had been paying as high as \$500,000 as an excessive amount in a particular year for the NAD Retirement Plan. While there were some other entities paying \$400,000 less than required into the NAD Retirement Plan. Even a NAD representative admitted there have been some irregularities in the way the organization has administered the funds from Black conferences. This report was made at the April 12, 2001 meeting.¹⁰⁸ Then, in the August 14, 2001, North American Division Regional Conferences Officers Council voted to ask the North American Division to adopt a policy modification at the 2001 North American Division year end meeting to make adjustment for the Regional Conferences Retirement Plan.¹⁰⁹

A Comparison of the NAD Sustentation Program and the Regional Conference New Retirement Plan

Under the NAD Sustentation Plan, a worker must work 40 years to receive full benefits, under the Regional Conference plan a worker could retire at the age of 62 with 30 years for full benefits. The NAD Sustentation Program provides maximum benefit for

¹⁰⁷ Regional Retirement Board Meeting, *Minutes*, Loma Linda, California (January 29, 2001), 2.

¹⁰⁸ North American Division Regional Conferences Officers Council, *Minutes*, Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama, (April 12, 2001), 3.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.

40 years, which is \$1,500 a month if the wife had little income, the Regional Conference plan, and a worker can receive up to \$2,300 a month with the wife's income having no impact on the worker's retirement. Under the NAD Sustentation plan a worker with 40 years of service would get 59 percent of the last income received (38 percent from social security and 21 percent from church funds), however, under the Regional Conference plan a worker with 25 years of service will receive 94.25 percent of their highest average earnings, with 38 percent from Social Security and 56 percent from the plan.¹¹⁰

With the NAD Sustentation Plan, if a worker's wife earned more than \$30,000 a year, the worker received a single rate (rate of a single person), with the Regional Conference plan, there is no provision to reduce his retirement no matter what the wife earns. In the NAD Sustentation Plan, if a worker's spouse died, and the person is receiving family allowance, the benefit is cut to a single rate, in the Regional Conference Plan, no reduction is ever encountered due to his or her spouse. With the NAD Sustentation Plan, if the worker died first, the spouse would receive 50 percent of the family rate; if the worker died first the spouse would receive 66 2/3 percent of retirement income, if the worker died before 62 years of age retirement.¹¹¹

It was voted to request that NAD made a \$6 million cash transfer to the Regional Retirement. Regional Conferences would assume responsibility for the Regional portion of the active employee liabilities, (it is important to note that Active Employee Liability Group does not include current retirees). The North American Division vote to declare

¹¹⁰Frank L. Jones, North American Division Black Caucus Meeting, *Minutes*, "A New Retirement Plan-Comparison of The Two plans," Capital Plaza, Holiday Inn, Sacramento, CA, (August 13, 2001), 2.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

the regional conferences employees as non-participants in the NAD retirement plan became effective January 1, 2000. Individual employees who sign an affidavit authorizing the transfer of personal pre-2000 service credit to the Regional Conference Retirement Plan should not be eligible to receive any current benefits under the terms of the Seventh-day Adventist Retirement Plan of the North American Division or the Health Care Assistance Plan for participants in the Seventh-day Adventist Retirement Plan of the North American Division. The Regional Retirement Plan is vastly superior to anything the SDA church organization offers or plans to offer.¹¹²

Conclusion

C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya have indicated in their definition that any Black Christian person is incorporated in the Black Church even if he or she is a member of Black local congregations in predominantly White denominations of Black United Methodist Churches and [Black] Regional Conferences/Black SDA Churches. In the “dialectical model” Lincoln and Mamiya demonstrate how Black United Methodist Churches and [Black] Regional Conferences/Black SDA Churches are involved in a perpetual series of dialectical stresses. The dialectical model employs the six parts of the dialectically related polar opposites in the inquiry of Black United Methodist Churches collated with [Black] Regional Conferences/Black SDA Churches.

Various distinctions are made between the Methodist Church and the SDA Church. One difference is that in the SDA Church pastors and workers were and are still paid on

¹¹² North American Division Black Conference President Council, *Minutes*, Regional Conference Office, Huntsville, Alabama (December 5, 2000), 1-2; Retirement Negotiations, *Minutes*, St. Louis Airport, (July 31, 2001), 1.

the same scale based on tithe being equally distributed. So that pastors and workers have comparable years of services working in a large church would receive no more compensation than pastors or workers with the same years of experience serving in small congregations in the SDA Church conference presidents receive about the same compensation as pastors with presidents having much greater responsibility, however in the United Methodist Church, the pastors remuneration scale was and still is based on church income, so a pastor of a larger church would receive more remuneration and bishops in the Methodist Church are compensated at a higher rate than pastors.

The Methodist Church created a Temporary General Aid Fund to help [Black] Annual Conferences to raise salaries and pensions for transferring pastors from the Central Jurisdiction/ [Black] Annual Conferences. The General Conference of SDA under the Sixteen Points Program established a new permanent program referred to as the “Regional Capital Reversion Fund,” where twenty percent of union conferences tithe received from Regional Conferences and Regional Churches would be returned to [Black] Regional Conferences. The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist recognized that the “Regional Capital Reversion Fund” provided some level of economic equality for [Black] Regional Conferences similar with White SDA Conferences and the Methodist Church and the United Methodist Church failed to see the essentiality of such a program for its Black pastors and churches.

[Black] Regional Conferences voted into existence in 1944/1945 were instituted differently from the way the Central Jurisdiction was created in the Methodist Church in 1939. [Black] Regional Conferences would have and has the same status and relationship

as White SDA Conferences and would be connected to union conferences within the same geographical area. The Central Jurisdiction was comprised of nineteen [Black] Annual Conferences in various geographical locations and was based solely on racial exclusiveness and racial segregation. The other five Methodist Jurisdictions, the Northeastern, Southeastern, North Central, South Central, and Western were instituted geographically not racially as the Central Jurisdiction. The [Black] Regional Conferences did not have their own union conferences jurisdictions and the Regional Conferences were not isolated from the White conference counterparts.

A major factor in the church growth and development of the SDA Church was and is the extraordinary Edward Earl Cleveland. In 1954, at only 34 years of age, Cleveland became the youngest person ever elected to the General Conference as an associate Ministerial Secretary, where he became the most influential evangelist for the SDA Church for more than twenty three years. Inauspiciously, the Central Jurisdiction [Black] Annual Conferences had no comparable individual as the impressive E.E. Cleveland. The absence of such an individual perhaps sheds light on the strong membership growth rate from 1946 to 1970 of 299.02 percent versus a [Black] Central Jurisdiction/[Black] rate of 10.22 percent. The SDA [Black] Regional membership growth rate was 29 times as the Methodist [Black] Central Jurisdiction [Black] Annual Conference membership growth. [Black] Central Jurisdiction/ [Black] Annual Conferences Income Fund increased by 310.31 percent from 1940 to 1964 and the [Black] Regional Conferences tithe fund increased by 922.94 percent from 1946 to 1970. The SDA [Black] Regional

Conferences tithe fund increased by nearly three times the [Black] Central Jurisdiction/[Black] Annual Conferences Income Fund during a 24 year period.

The statistical data shows a [Black] Regional Conferences membership growth rate of 299.02 percent from 1946 to 1970 and a White SDA Conferences membership growth rate of 138.99 percent 1946 to 1970. The [Black] Regional Conference membership growth rate was 2.15 times the White SDA Conferences membership growth rate. The White SDA Conferences tithe fund figure increased between, 1946 to 1970, by 475.62 percent while the [Black] Regional Conferences tithe fund percentage increased from 1946 to 1970 by 922.94 percent. The [Black] Regional Conferences membership growth rate increased between 1975 to 2000 by 161.53 percent and the White SDA Conferences membership growth rate between 1975 to 2000 increased by 69.61 percent (the white membership increase was attributable to growth in membership from Hispanics and Asians and other minorities). The [Black] SDA Regional Conferences membership growth rate was 2.32 time the White SDA Conferences growth rate from 1975 to 2000. The [Black] SDA Regional Conferences fund figure increased by 685.84 percent from 1975-2000 and the White SDA Conferences tithe fund figure increased by 448.14 percent from 1975 to 2000. The [Black] SDA Regional Conferences tithe fund increased at 1.53 times the White SDA Conferences tithe fund from 1975 to 2000.

In the old North American Sustentation Program, a worker who worked forty years would receive full benefits if the wife (or husband) had little income and would receive the maximum benefit of \$1,500 a month. A worker under the Regional Conferences Retirement Plan, a worker would receive \$2,300 a month, with the spouse's income

having no impact on a worker's retirement. The new defined benefit (a plan totally funded by the Regional Conferences) the Regional Conferences Retirement Plan was devised by Joseph W. McCoy. A worker on this plan could retire at the age of 62 with 30 years of service and receive full benefits, a totally better approach to the old plan or to the new defined contribution plan (where workers contribute 4 percent of their yearly salary and local conferences pay into a fund for employees).

CHAPTER IV

BLACK METHODISTS FOR CHURCH RENEWAL COMPARED WITH THE SIXTEEN POINTS PROGRAM

The period of the 1960s and 1970s which witnessed a drive for civil rights in the social, economic, and political sphere had its own counterweight in the religious communities of some predominantly America. In the religious communities of predominately White denominations the thrust for integration and equal rights was indicated by Black members organizing in opposition to a general pattern of racial discrimination in church policies and practices rather than for complete integration in terms of cultural assimilation. In the United Methodist Church the major grievances resulted from the exclusion of African Americans from all aspects of the church's general boards, agencies, and staffs as well as total involvement of Blacks in the life and leadership of the church. The Black Methodists for Church Renewal endeavored to push for fairness and equality and renewal by resolutions, lobbying, confrontations with denominational and annual conferences boards and agencies, and for the total involvements of African Americans in the life and leadership of the United Methodist Church without losing Black cultural identity.

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s prompted Black SDA's to oppose the church's racial policies and practices at the denominations General Conference session in San Francisco in 1962, when the first Black F. L. Peterson was elected a general vice-president of Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is during this period that important

impediments of White Adventist discrimination and segregation came crashing down in the denomination's schools, hospitals, and churches. In spite of the progress toward integration, the conflict of the 1960s and 1970s persuaded the overwhelming majority of African American leaders that only the establishment of [Black] Regional Union Conferences (a union consists of local conferences in a particular geographical area) would bring about racial justice and full participation at all levels of the SDA organization for Blacks. The proposal for [Black] Regional Union Conferences was voted down on two different occasions during the 1970's by SDA General Conference Committees. But in a compromise, it was voted to implement a General Conference affirmative action approach known as The Sixteen Points Program to correct the racial inequalities. The Sixteen Points Program will be compared with the Black Methodists for Church Renewal approach. The United Methodist Commission on the Status and Role of Women on women's issues will be compared with the SDA Church and the Sixteen Points Program on women's concerns.

Issues involved in the Organizing of Black Methodists for Church Renewal

What the Black Methodists did not attain in the death of the Central Jurisdiction was defacto inclusiveness. Their definition for defacto inclusiveness was the "absence on all levels of church life of patterns and policies based on color." But such inclusiveness did not and has not happened in a wide spread manner. The dissolution of the Central Jurisdiction in 1964-1967 only moved the conflict for African American Methodists by

law from being in separate Annual Conferences to incorporation in the overall organization of the United Methodist Church.¹

In 1976, almost ten years following the determination to abolish the Central Jurisdiction, Grant S. Shockley, former President of Interdenominational Theological Seminary, along with a group of scholars conducted a broad study of the United Methodist Church. A survey was sent out to Black ministers in the United Methodist Church which was comprised of pastors, district superintendents, and a test group of White ministers. The study deduced that United Methodism had accepted the notion of ‘inclusive fellowship’ but seemed unclear about the radicalness of the ethics it invoked and was unwilling to actualize the behavior it demanded. Guided by such a partial ethic, United Methodism over the past ten years had identified structural desegregation with ‘inclusiveness’ and the redistribution of the dissolved former Central Jurisdiction into White Annual Conferences as addressing the issue of ‘inclusiveness’. However, the Shockley study uncovered the actual circumstances that existed at the local church level. “In spite of more than a decade of efforts toward merger and integration, most Black members were in Black churches and most White members were in all-White churches.”²

It was in this atmosphere that a group of African American Methodists were sure that “from this time forward our time under God is now.” In the streets of America the outbursts crescendoed across the landscape for “Black Power” and “Black Identity” and

¹ John H. Graham, *Black United Methodists: Retrospect and Prospect* (New York: Vantage press, 1979), 98-99.

² Grant S. Shockley, et al., *Black Pastors and Churches in the United Methodism* (Atlanta: Center for Research in Social Change, Emory University, 1976), 2-3.

African Americans were sporting African lifestyles and African dashiki. In the United Methodist Church, a group advocated material conduct, daring conveyance, and definite transformation.³

Thus, it was against this background that a cluster of individuals established the foundation for the Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR) in Cincinnati, Ohio, February 6-9, 1968. The theme of BMCR was “our time under God is now.” Of course, 1968, was a year of transformation, or of radical alteration. The BMCR endeavored to hammer out a method to be both African American and United Methodist and remain in the church while preserving self-respect, regard, authority, and honesty. As a result, a Black United Methodist ad hoc committee composed of over a hundred individuals was set up which encouraged other African Americans to gather in Cincinnati to help United Methodism to chart a different course. The ad hoc committee extended a message requesting all Black Methodists to involve themselves in advancing and producing a “life of power and unity in the new United Methodist Church....determined to serve God by redeeming our brothers, which in turn redeems us.”⁴

A group of 259 African American Methodist delegates formally registered from various regional jurisdictions to pursue a direction in the United Methodist Church. While another group explored strategies for helping the United Methodist Church to really become effective on the local level, through annual conferences, boards, and agencies, jurisdictional conferences, and the General Conference. They proposed to

³ *Findings of Black Methodists for Church Renewal* (New York: Black Methodists for Church Renewal, 1968), 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1, 6.

consider the recruitment and itinerary of [Black] pastors and to encourage them to live up to the distinctive mission that the Black church must carry into the 'new' church. They also proposed giving urgent priority for missions for the cities where they lived and to suggest a new form for the life of local congregations. They recommended creative strategies be established for the kind of unity among [Black] Methodists that would mean a vigorous faithful Methodism. These [Black] Methodists, who gathered for four days, were striving for a true identity and to center their lives which they stated were being judged by the scandal of being separate.⁵

The Black Methodists for Church Renewal (BMCR) developed and published a document concerning their recommendations and conclusions. The document, referred to as "The Black Paper:" offered precise legislation to the 1968 General Conferences with recommendations; a blue print for urban ministries; a clarion summons for the United Methodist Church to more freely endorse and guard the traditional overwhelmingly enrolled [Black] Methodist Colleges; a positive declaration that would advance 'Black Power'; a summons to local Black Churches to be engaged in the local Black community; and a procedure to set up a lasting organizational structure into a formal caucus to be known as Black Methodists For Church Renewal.⁶

At the 1968 General Conference session of the United Methodist Church, the Black Methodists for Church Renewal were engaged in convincing the General Conference delegates to change. They demanded the creation of the Commission on Religion and

⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

Race; investigation of whether or not the job conduct of the Methodist Publishing House was discriminatory, and the establishment of a 20 million dollar quadrennial fund (the fund for Reconciliation) to finance community action projects in the inner cities of America.⁷

The Black Methodists who came together to form BMCR were endeavoring to take command of their lives. These BMCR caucuses were to become the avenue of transmitting the new self-concept and temper of the times conveyed through the African American community. The BMCR became the vehicle for African Americans to examine themselves and the church structure, as well as propose a different approach to reaching the poor and disadvantaged. The members of the BMCR stayed in the United Methodist Church based on the conviction that “a so-called Christian structure could move beyond its racism.” The BMCR persisted in its objective “to transform the Church utilizing its resources for a new sense of mission to Black people.”⁸

Black Methodists for Church Renewal at the 1970 Special Session of the General Conference in St. Louis, called for definite performance in the sphere of economic and educational advancement. As a result of the pressure applied by BMCR, and the garnering support from a diverse number of community groups and organizations along with people of various races and minorities, the General Conference passed several resolutions that addressed BMCR requests. For example, the General Conference appropriated \$2 million annually for 1971 and 1972 to the Commission on Religion and

⁷ *Black Methodists for Church Renewal at the General Conference of the United Methodist Church in 1968* (Dallas, Texas: Black Methodist for Church Renewal, 1968), 1-3.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

Race for Minority Group Economic Empowerment. The General Conference also enacted an annual goal of \$4 million for “Race Relations Sunday” to assist the twelve United Methodist Black Colleges. And finally it set up a million dollar scholarship fund for minority college students, to be overseen by the Board of Education.⁹

A plan created as a result of the Fund for Reconciliation was the Black Community Developers Program, the creative idea of Negail Riley, a founder of BMCR and the Black United Fund. In formulating the Community Developers Program, the persons involved as developers were characteristically lay persons, in most cases young men and women who often employed this encounter to determine the likelihood of a fulltime professional occupation in church work. An unintended consequence of this program was that during this time-frame it became the greatest stream of persons’ passage into the ministry in the United Methodist Church.¹⁰

The Commission on Race and Religion (CORR) arose from a motion by Roy Nichols, the pastor of Salem Church in Harlem in 1968, on the floor of the General Conference to “do everything possible to eliminate any structural organization based on race by 1972...to understand the pervasive nature of racism and to move...to lessen its impact and to finally eliminate it.” Winston Taylor stated, about CORR in 1987, that

⁹ Thelma P. Barnes, “Through the Years” *Our Time Under God Is Now: Reflection on Black Methodists for Church Renewal*, ed. Woodie W. White, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 34.

¹⁰ Negail R. Riley, *A Proposal for the Black Community Developers Program* (New York: Board of Global Ministries, 1972), 2; William B. McClain, *Black People in the Methodist Church: Whither Thou Goest?* (Cambridge, Mass: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1984), 98-99.

“[o]ut of it came a community-a family relationship which the writer saw nowhere else among United Methodist boards and agencies.”¹¹

C. Eric Lincoln, a professor of religion and culture at Duke University and a Black United Methodist, offered his evaluation of the United Methodist Church, after 1964 in which he pointed out that: “No other denomination has gone so far in depth and determination as the Methodists.” An indication of this transformation, for example, was that in 1968, there were eight recently selected Black superintendents of districts in which the churches were primarily White, a significant figure in 1968. By 1978 that count had climbed to thirty-nine and, in 1988, the total was in excess of sixty African Americans. Blacks in executive leadership positions at the top echelon, increased from fifty to one hundred ten from 1969 to 1984, due to the persistent endeavors of BMCR. However, Lincoln noted that,

To endorse carefully selected Blacks for unusual appointment, or even to elect a few Blacks to high national office is one thing; it is quite another to bring about inclusiveness at the level of the local church. Here, the Methodists are no exception. It is the American dilemma all over again, high ideas with low-grade implementation, form without substance, paralyzed motion.¹²

An investigation of the Black United Methodist membership figures, provoked concern regarding the perplexing reduction in membership. The Central Jurisdiction, in 1964, had an officially registered membership of 373,327 African Americans, but in 1991, the membership had dropped to around 234,000. In 1968, there were 2,853 Black churches,

¹¹ Winston H. Taylor, “Religion and Race in the United Methodist Church,” *New World Outlook*, vol. LXXXVII, no. 7 (July-August, 1987): 16-17.

¹² C. Eric Lincoln, *Race, Religion, and the Continuing American Dilemma* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1984), 170, 189; Winston H. Taylor, “Religion and Race in United Methodist Church,” *New World Outlook* (July-August, 1987): 18-19.

however in 1991 only 2,425. The BMCR pushed for invigorating Black Methodist Churches through a church membership growth plan, a leadership advancement plan, a clergy enlistment program, an outreach program, and a young adult program. The evidence seemed to show that Black Methodist Church growth and development in the annual conferences did not appear to be a major issue in the United Methodist Church.¹³ Church growth and development, however, was a major concern in the SDA Church with Black growth four times as fast as in the White sector of the North American Division a number, which excluded Asians and Hispanics from the growth figures.¹⁴

Issues Involved in the Sixteen Points Program Adapted in the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventist Church

Church Historian George R. Knight has argued that:

It is a well-known fact that individuals pass through a life cycle that begins in infancy, advances through rapidly developing adolescence and vigorous young adulthood, and progresses on into the slowing down of middle age. If a person lives long enough, he or she will eventually face the mental and/or physical decay of old age. But it is less well recognized that organizations, including churches, pass through a similar aging process... The good news however is that, unlike individuals, whose life cycle is biologically determined, organizations do not necessarily have to pass into the degenerative parts of the cycle. The alternative is ongoing revival and reformation.¹⁵

Knight further suggests that Adventism achieved denominational full development at the half-way point of the 1950's and subsequently to a half century of full development the denomination exigency to reorganize and adapt for reinvigorated energy. He made

¹³ Joseph Roberson, "A Reminder of Church's Diversity," *Our Time Under God Is Now: Reflection on Black Methodists for Church Renewal*, ed. Woodie W. White, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 78.

¹⁴ George R. Knight, *A Brief History of Seventh-Day Adventists* 2nd ed. (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Association, 2000), 137.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 140.

the case that “the alternative is to face the possibility of succumbing to the threats of institutionalism, secularization, and dysfunctionality. Such dilemmas are the lot of organizations that refuse to deal with the problems created by unusual success during their previous stages of development.”¹⁶

One such change that occurred in the SDA resulted from organizational structure (divisions as branches of the General Conference to administer the work of the unions) with the noted omission of North America. In all other divisions there was a division president who possessed General Conference power in their division, whereas, a General Conference vice president was designated to administer the North American Division, but did not hold the name of division president.¹⁷

While divisions outside North America sustained a complete list of administrative and departmental personnel, regulated their budgets, and constructed policy for their division according to the structural procedures for division, and the division president was also a vice-president of the General Conference. The North American Division however, maintained no distinct administrative, department and budget; the functional expenses of North American Division were included as a segment of the General Conference outlay. Furthermore, General Conference employees managed all administrative and departmental functions for North America. In real terms, the North

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 141.

¹⁷ Richard W. Schwarz and Floyd Greenleaf, *Light-Bearer: A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, Revised Edition (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2000), 584.

American Division occurred in name only. It operated as an essential segment of the General Conference in what was designated as the “special relationship.”¹⁸

The beginning of the change in the relationship occurred with the election in 1979 of C. E. Bradford as the first Black vice president for North America. In 1986, SDA church voted Bradford the official designation of president of the North American Division and vice-president of the General Conference. Bradford introduced the initial thrust in diminishing the connection of the North American Division and the General Conference in regards to the various world divisions. In 1990, delegates to the General Conference session voted to organize a totally separate North American Division that would operate as the various world divisions, with a full list of departmental personnel. North America, however, where the church was founded, still garnered an unequal proportion of jobs at the General Conference headquarters.¹⁹

Before 1969, not one union conference in North America included an African American administrator. Out of nine unions, just two unions employed Blacks in departmental positions. The Southern Union employed an associate publishing director and the Atlantic Union employed a director for public relations and a ministerial director. Following the vote adopting the “Sixteen Points,” the first African American union administrator was voted in North America at the same time as the first Black

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 584-585.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 586.

departmental director. From 1970 through 1972, seven African Americans were elected as union conference officials and elected fourteen Blacks as departmental directors.²⁰

By 1972, adequate success had been achieved that the “Sixteen Points” received an endorsement to be granted additional time to resolve the various concerns that continued to remain. The matter of African American or Black Unions, nevertheless, persisted as a viable concern, due to frequent unfortunate racial occurrences. Blacks from the previous SDA Church record, being excluded, would endeavor to pursue broader involvement in the church.²¹

The matter of Regional Unions was addressed again at the behest of Regional Conferences presidents at the Annual Council Fall meeting of the General Conference where actions are voted by the General Conference Committee. The 1978 discussion to organize one or two Regional Union Conferences was not passed, but the discourse led to a positive result. Up until this point, no Black had been voted to head a union or be North American Division president. A year after the 1978 Annual Council meeting, Charles E. Bradford was elected the first Black vice-president of the North American Division, a position he held until he retired in 1990. Two years after the 1978 Annual Council, Robert Carter was elected president of the Lake Union Conference, becoming the first Black union conference president. Carter held the position of union president until he retired in 1994. In recent years, since the late 1990s to the present, two or three of the nine union presidents have been Black and one Hispanic. It has been noted that

²⁰ Jacob Justiss, *Angels in Ebony* (Toledo, Ohio: Jet Printing Service, 1975), 151.

²¹ *Ibid.*

absent the pressure and concept of Regional Union Conferences and the consequential discourse it caused, it is acknowledged that progress would not have occurred as soon as it did.²²

No matter the way the concept of Black Unions began, either from Black leaders or White leaders, it had been indicated this item was explored as a relevant alternative by the most powerful echelon of the SDA church organization in the 1950s. The new General Conference president, W. H. Branson, supported the concept and recommended it be put into effect. At this juncture, Black leaders opposed it due to the concern it would hinder attempts to achieve integration and would result in the removal of the Black presence on union conference boards and committees which Blacks then experienced.²³

By 1968, the atmosphere among African Americans had been transformed from integration to an acquiescence of the discrimination routine that appeared intractable. African American consciousness and African American identity were the emphasis from the street corner to the church. The late Jesse Robert Wagner wrote H. D. Singleton, the then secretary of the Regional Department of the General Conference (the Regional Department dealt with the work in the Regional Conferences and among Blacks in non-Regional Conferences) regarding the matter of vertical movement for African American employees. Wagner strongly advocated that a gathering of African American ministers be held to converse over these concerns and other significant matters.²⁴

²² Harold L. Lee and Monte Sahlin, *E.E. Cleveland: Evangelist Extraordinary* (Lincoln, Nebraska: Center for Creative Ministry), 175, 180.

²³ Jacob Justiss, *Angels in Ebony* (Toledo: Jet Printing Service, 1975), 146.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 146-147.

The opportunity for this type of gathering occurred with a Message Magazine meeting convened on Oakwood [now] University Campus (formerly college). In this assembly of ministers, Singleton was harshly questioned regarding the result and reaction of his department to the demand for the African American outreach. The recommendation was made that a more powerful executive presence be rendered to African American leadership. Thus the concept of Black Unions was introduced to this sizable group of African Americans. Jacob Justiss then gave this account: On April 27, 1969 at a meeting of representatives of all eight regional conferences at Oakwood [University], 130 voted in favor, 11 against, and eight abstaining in a vote on Black Unions.²⁵

The issue was put on the schedule for the following North American Regional Advisory Committee meeting, a committee composed of all African American officials and General Conference officials, and other African American officials and lay persons of significance. An outcome of this meeting was the voted recommendation that the General Conference provide an earnest examination regarding African American Unions. The General Conference agreed by creating a special commission of African Americans and Whites to investigate the issue. Following an unspecified preparatory activity, the commission assembled in April, 1970 in the General Conference worship room. The worship room became completely filled with employees. Various individuals, detecting the significance of the event, journeyed to the meeting at their own expense.²⁶

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 148.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 148-149.

The case of the Black Union was convincingly presented and a motion was made to vote on the proposal. Adroitly, the Chairman, Neal C. Wilson, declined to accept the motion. The debate was long and protracted and ardent, the lunch hour came, no vote. The vote was delayed until after noontime. A number of individuals viewed this as a stalling strategy of the chairman, regarded as the nearest, highest echelon supporter of the Black work.²⁷

Annoyance and indignation arose when, following the noontime meal, the vote did not occur. Large numbers of Whites, with their decision already made, departed the meeting, placing their “no” votes with the chairman. The overwhelming no votes of the White leadership resulted in the rumor that the actual vote had occurred at the lunch table where most of the White committee members had their lunch. The mood was so tense that a disastrous division seemed inevitable. It was this environment that prompted E. E. Cleveland, the dean of Black preachers in the SDA Church, to head to the podium. In spite of the fact that he had strongly advocated for Black Unions and was desirous of the vote, Cleveland earnestly appealed, with grieving tears, for solidarity. The president of the General Conference, Robert H. Pierson, intermixed his tears with the great warrior, and an eminent group of those attending advocated that the body of Christ not be torn apart. All who were attending the meeting indicated that only the tears and the oil of the Holy Spirit brought peace which permitted the meeting to proceed. The vote finally occurred and the motion for Black Union’s was rejected. As a compromise, it was voted to implement an affirmative action Sixteen Point Program to address the racial injustices

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 149-150.

in the church. This alternative affirmative action program was to be allowed a two-year experimental period to make an assessment of its progress. The 1970 Spring Council, a General Conference meeting in the spring where actions were voted on by the General Conferences Committee of the SDA voted the “Sixteen Points” program into existence.²⁸

The Sixteen Point Program that was passed included the following provisions:

1. Seventh-day Adventist churches open their doors to any would-be worshiper or perspective member regardless of race or color and welcome such with brotherly love and concern. Where it is felt that this principle is violated, it is the duty of the next higher organization to investigate and recommend effective measures to correct the inequity.

2. The following additions to the baptismal vow and *Church Manual* were being recommended to the General Conference session (the *underlined* portions will show the new wording to be adopted):

“a. All who enter the kingdom of heaven must have experienced conversion, or the new birth, through which man receives a new heart and becomes a new creature. *Thus, regardless of ethnic or social background, he becomes a member of ‘the whole family in heaven and earth.’* (Matt. 18:3; John 3:3; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eze. 36:26, 27; Heb. 8:10-12; 1 Peter 1:23; Eph. 3:15; Acts 17:26.).”

“b. Do you believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is *the remnant church of prophecy into which people of every nation, race, and language are invited and accepted, and do you desire membership in its fellowship?*”

This paragraph is a part of the baptismal vow that is presented to a candidate prior to administering the rite of baptism. At an appropriate time during this session in Atlantic City, a forthright statement should be made by the leadership of the church dealing with and giving support to the position of the church on race relations.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 150-151.

3. Conferences selecting qualified spiritual leaders as pastors shall not be limited by race or color. Should some Black pastors be appointed to White churches and some White pastors to Black churches, a very desirable example of church fellowship and understanding would result; therefore, programs to this end should be undertaken with the support and guidance of unions.

4. In order to make our public ministry more effective and to help members and potential members realize the importance of this brotherhood, conference administrators are urged to make clear to pastors and evangelists that it is their duty to teach these principles as a part of the gospel and our special message for the world. We further recommend that prospective members be so instructed either in the baptismal class or in personal Bible studies.

5. Special emphasis should be given to human-relations workshops to implement resolutions which, unless carried out, are useless. These workshops should include all workers—field, education, institutional, and leading laymen from both Black and White conferences and churches. It is recommended that union and/or conference-wide human-relations workshops be conducted in every union in North America before the 1971 Autumn Council.

6. Where normal entrance requirements are met, all Seventh-day Adventist schools from elementary to university level shall admit Seventh-day Adventist youth to the school of their choice without regard to race or color. Where a church-supported school fails to follow the counsel of the church as stated to accept students into school programs, it is the duty of the next higher organization to investigate and recommend corrective measures.

7. A bi-racial commission of not more than seven members shall be appointed in the North American Division to deal with complaints of discrimination or exclusion and other problems that may be appealed to it for help. This commission, in cooperation, and in counsel with the union conferences and/or the local conference and/or institution, shall have authority to act immediately, making a thorough investigation and seeking solutions to these problems.

8. On the union conference level, positive steps should be taken to open doors in the area of administrative and departmental leadership for those who have demonstrated their ability and qualifications to serve all segments of the church. In unions where there are Regional conferences or where there is an organized Regional department, the administrative officer level should include Black leadership.

9. Black personnel shall be selected to serve in our publishing houses, hospital, academies, colleges, universities, and other denominational institutions of the staff and/or administrative levels. Where it seems advisable, institutions should institute training programs for the development of Black personnel in technical and administrative skills.

10. There is a missionary magazine dedicated to the Black community in North America. The circulation of this journal is primarily the responsibility of the Regional churches. The Autumn Council of 1967 voted to help finance an associate circulation manager for THE MESSAGE MAGAZINE. We reaffirm that recommendation on the basis of the 1967 agreement on union participation and ask that (the recommendation for an associate circulation manager) this be implemented in the immediate future.

11. At the time of the annual North American union conference presidents' meetings, one or more Black administrators on the union level will be invited to participate, as well as representation from the Regional Department of the General Conference.

12. In order to provide opportunity for the presidents of Regional conferences (including the secretary of the Regional Department of the Pacific Union) to consult together regarding problems distinctive to their work, Autumn Councils will schedule two meetings of this group each year, under North American Division leadership, in conjunction with other regularly called meetings. When additional meetings are required, such would be arranged by the North American Division administration.

13. The next edition of the MINISTER'S MANUAL should include as a part of the ministerial candidate's examination before ordination, questions regarding the candidate's attitude toward human relations.

14. We recommend that the General Conference lay plans to provide literature that would be useful in operating human-relations workshops, setting forth standards, guidelines, and procedures in this area.

15. We recommend that the General Conference officers develop some plan whereby reports of progress in human relations may be publicized throughout the constituency in North America on local as well as general levels.

16. We recommend the adoption in principle of the following plan of increased financial relationships involving Regional work; it is suggested that in addition to funds provided by existing policies and union appropriations for Regional work, a new fund be set up by the General Conference which would be reverted to the unions, who in turn would allocate amounts to the Regional work

to be used only for capital improvements and denominational scholarships. The amounts reverted to the unions would be in proportion to tithe income received by the General Conference for each union. The fund would be known as “Regional Capital Reversion Fund.”²⁹

This plan is to be reviewed at the end of three years. The General Conference portion of these funds will remain with the General Conference to be distributed by the North American Division Committee on Administration upon recommendation by the union conference presidents at the time of their annual meeting. Based on the tithe figures, this would conclude in a fund total an aggregate evenly proportionate to twenty percent of the union conferences’ portions of tithe received from Regional Conferences and Regional churches.³⁰

Historical Overview

As the decades of the 1960’s begin to wind down the activism of the New Frontier and the Great Society fostered more individuals to pursue equality and it raised expectations. In the Civil Right Movement, Blacks launched efforts that focused on economic and social concerns. Those African American leaders who had rebuffed assimilation called for fundamental system-wide social and economic transformation. The Supreme Court promoted activism and change, pronouncing rulings that broadened the freedoms of people while curtailing the authority of the state. Hispanics and Native Americans established structures to advocate their issues. The redevelopment of the women’s movement followed the pattern of the Civil Rights Movement to challenge the

²⁹ *General Conference Committee on Regional Conference and Human Relations, “The Sixteen Points,”* (April 23, 1970): 1-4.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

arrangement that gender plays in a male controlled society to promote economic, legal and social justice in the whole of American life.³¹

On April 23, 1968, at a merger conference in Dallas, Texas of the Evangelical United Brethren and The Methodist Church was born The United Methodist Church. The formation of the United Methodist Church occurred during a period when Americans were more alienated from each other than in generations. A part of the problem was the discord and shock the nation endured by its most protracted war, Vietnam. The sudden expansion of the war effort by President Lyndon Johnson in 1965 caused intense discussion. Whether or not the war was moral bothered the conscience of the United Methodist in this time period and appeared to be the source of a rift between church members. During the spring of 1972, when North Vietnam commenced a significant attack with major advantages in South Vietnam, President Richard Nixon responded by heightening bombing of North Vietnam. The United Methodist held their initial General Conference and after a lengthy debate voted a resolution disapproving America's participation in the war and demanding President Nixon stop the bombing. In about a year a cease fire agreement was signed between the parties but there continued to be friction between pro and anti church members over the issue of war. All of these things exposed the differences in the United States of America.³²

³¹ Carol Berkin, et al, eds., *Making America: A History of the United States*, 5th edition (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008), 874, 878, 902.

³² John G. McEllhenny, ed., *United Methodism in America: A Compact History* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1992), 124-125; Berkin, et al., *Making America: A History of the United States*, 902.

The important issues of the Vietnam War were also being addressed in the foreign policy arena. As president, Nixon promoted solidarity with his practical approach for an improvement in foreign affairs between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. He supported the policy of Vietnamization as a strategy to remove troops from Vietnam. The peace agreement he helped broker failed to prevent the take-over of South Vietnam by North Vietnam.³³

Nixon recognized the connection between foreign policy and domestic policy. On the domestic policy front, Nixon indicated by modification broadening the scope of pieces of Great Society legislation and by adhering to Keynesian philosophy to help the economy. He enacted a "southern strategy" to attract Southerners to the Republican Party by appointing more conservative judges to the federal bench, particularly the Supreme Court, and by limiting federal backing of civil rights and busing to achieve integration, although supporting the Philadelphia Plan on affirmative action to hire Black apprentices in 1969. Therefore, Nixon was overwhelmingly elected to a second term. A proposed Equal Rights Constitutional Amendment approved by Congress in 1972, but failed to be ratified by the required thirty eight states so that the ratification period was extended from 1979-1982. *Roe v. Wade* was a 1973 Supreme Court ruling that women have a right to choose an abortion during the first three months of pregnancy. Nixon's, penchant for destroying his political foes resulted in the Watergate break-in and his self-destruction and impeachment. As a result Nixon resigned in 1974, which caused a nationwide earthquake of disenchantment with the political process and government. President Ford, the unelected successor to Nixon, attempted to heal the nation but confronted a

³³ Berkin, et al., *Making America: A History of the United States*, 902, 900.

plunging economy and a politically critical public, Ford secured his party's nomination in 1976, but lost to President Carter in the general election.³⁴

During the Carter presidency, the economic growth that had been a part of the post-war years was slackening, causing American expectation for the economy to fall and to make it more difficult to achieve an economic recovery. Carter removed or reduced federal regulation of a number of industries and deregulated the transportation industry, railroads, trucking and airlines and the natural gas industry. The expenses for gas and airfare declined as new areas of competition entered the field. The Carter administration sent one hundred thirteen energy recommendations to Congress to act on, but after the discovery of new oil fields in Alaska, only small portions of the plan were enacted by Congress in 1977, when we imported sixty percent of our oil. Carter formed the Department of Energy as a cabinet position to oversee issues related to the nation's energy resources. The timeframe from the conclusion of World War II to the 1970s had been the period of the longest sustained growth in the United States history. But throughout the 1970s, where the economy had previously grown at 2.5 percent, it grew at only a little more than 1 percent. The cost of living increased by 200 percent. The result was reduced production, fewer jobs and closed down manufacturing plants due to globalization.³⁵

In the area of foreign policy, the Carter administration focused on abuses of human rights. In January 1979, Carter also negotiated an agreement that resulted in renewing

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 878,896-897,902,914.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 911-912.

full diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. On March 26, 1979 the Camp David Accords were finalized in a treaty in which Israel gave back territory acquired from Egypt in war and Egypt acknowledged Israel as a nation. The taking of sixty-six Americans as hostages from U.S. embassy in Tehran eventually ended in all hostages being released on January 20, 1981, concluding 444 days of imprisonment. Finally, the Carter Doctrine was employed, stating that "any nation that attempted to take control of the Persian Gulf would be repelled by any means necessary, including the use of force."³⁶

Ronald Reagan was elected president in 1980. He made the case that the only limits on American greatness was immoderate regulation and interference in American society. Reagan pledged to reaffirm American influence and restore the assertiveness concerning the Cold War with a commitment to conservative renewal which helped in electing Reagan to the presidency. As president, Reagan performed a number of conservative expectations by decreasing aid to some social programs, lessening and removing some regulations, endeavoring to utilize American influence world-wide. A major accomplishment was the Intermediate Nuclear Force Treaty in 1987 that provided for the demolition of all U.S. and Soviet medium range nuclear missiles from Europe. Reagan asked Congress in 1983 to fund the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) and Congress provided 17 billion dollars for SDI research. If the SDI system was 95 percent

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 907, 909-910.

effective, the five percent of Soviet warheads that would land would demolish the nation.

The military budget increased from 164 billion to 228 billion by 1985.³⁷

Reagan presented supply-side economics, and Reaganomics, the idea that decreasing federal regulation and lowering income taxes on the wealthy to 28 percent and increasing the money available for investment would benefit the economy and everyone besides. The result of the supply-side economics was a huge increase in the national debt and deficits, an increase in trade deficit, and a decline in the industrial base. The Savings and Loan industry deregulation during the Reagan administration resulted in speculation that caused many S & L's to fail. The Immigration Reform and Control Act enacted by Congress in 1986 that prevented the hiring of illegal aliens, permitted those who had been in the United State before 1982, to be eligible for citizenship.³⁸

In 1988, the citizenry voted to retain the Reagan mode by selecting George Bush. Bush pledged to exhibit leadership and pursue American resolve in world affairs. In 1991, with the break-down of the Soviet Union and communism in Eastern Europe, Bush concentrated his attention to promoting a democratic transformation in both Eastern Europe and Central America. Following Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Bush arranged a multi-national alliance of 700,000 troops, consigning a half-million American troops to the emancipation of Kuwait. Bush's poll numbers zoomed past 90 percent in 1991 as the United States would assert it had triumphed in two wars, in the Gulf War over Iraq and the Cold War. Nonetheless, by 1992, Bush possessed lower poll numbers of about 40

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 932,924,921.

³⁸ Carol Berkin et al, eds., *Making America: A History of the United States*, 918-919, 996.

percent with the election drawing near. Bush oversaw after 1990, a seriously collapsing economy that emphasized the feebleness of his domestic approach and really undermined public trust in his leadership of the economy.³⁹

Results of the Sixteen Points Program at the General Conference and North American Divisions Echelons from 1970-2001

The number of Blacks in the General Conference and/or in the North American Division echelon had increased since 1970 after the affirmative action Sixteen Points Program commenced. In 1970, there were eleven Blacks out of ninety individuals who served on the General Conference echelon of the SDA church. By 1970, the number of Blacks had increased to sixteen world-wide in all divisions of the world field. B.L. Archibald became the first Black to serve as a division president of the Inter-American Division (which was comprised of Central America and the Caribbean region.) and F.L. Bland, another African American minister was elected to serve as a general vice-president of the General Conference of SDA (a general vice-president is assigned to a particular territory or to oversee a special area for the organization).⁴⁰

By 1975, that number had increased to sixteen with one individual elected a division president and two individuals serving as general vice presidents of the General Conference. The number of Blacks world-wide was twenty-two, including the other divisions. In 1980, the figures of Blacks increased to seventeen in the General

³⁹ Berkin, *Making America; A History of the United States*, 906,932,927-929.

⁴⁰ General Conference Nominating Committee Report, "Roster of Officers and Departmental Secretaries Elected to Serve 1970-1975", *Review and Herald*, (July 9-16): 228-229. The Adventism's general church paper has altered its designation three times. Originally the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, it became known as the *Review and Herald*, and it is now referred to as the *Adventist Review*.

Conference echelon, with one Black elected Secretary of the General Conference, the second highest administrative position in the church's organization. Also, C.E. Bradford was reelected to serve as vice-president for the North America Division, a pivotal position in the church organization. World-wide two Blacks were elected division president, one a division treasurer, with sixteen others holding various positions in different divisions.⁴¹

The 1985 General Conference elected the same number as the 1980 session, seventeen Blacks to the General Conference. Two Blacks were elected to vice-president positions, one re-elected as vice-president for the North American Division and the elected as a general vice-president of the General Conference, and one re-elected as the Secretary of the General Conference of SDA. World-wide, three Blacks were elected as division president; two were elected division treasurers, with fifteen others holding a variety of positions in several divisions.⁴² The 1990 General Conference session, despite a time of downsizing, elected fourteen Blacks to the General Conference. One Black was reelected to the second highest position of Secretary of the General Conference, and two were elected to the position of general vice-president of the General Conference. World-wide three Blacks were elected as division presidents, one as a division secretary, and seventeen others serving in other capacities.⁴³

⁴¹ Nominating Committee Report for 1975-1980 for Officers and Departmental Secretaries, *Review and Herald* (July 11-18, 1975): 809,825,842-843,855,871,887; Nominating Committee Report for 1980-1985 for Officers and Departmental Secretaries, *Adventist Review* (April 18-25, 1980): 440,472,504,528,560,592.

⁴² Nominating Committee Report for 1985-1990 for Officers and Departmental Secretaries, *Adventist Review* (June 29-July 5, 1985): 696,744,776,808,824,840,865,888.

⁴³ Nominating Committee Report for Officers and Departmental Directors 1990-1995, *Adventist*

The 1995 General Conference session presented a picture of further reduction in personnel, however, twelve Blacks in the top echelons of the General Conferences and the North American Divisions with one the secretary and two general vice-presidents of the General Conference. World-wide two Blacks served as division presidents of General Conference, and two as executive secretaries of divisions of the General Conference, and another sixteen serving in other positions.⁴⁴ Finally, at the 2000 General Conference the number of Blacks serving in the General Conference and North American Division were twenty-three, with one the Secretary of the General Conference and one as a general vice-president of the General Conference. World-wide, three Blacks served as division presidents of the General Conferences, with four as executive secretaries or associate secretaries of divisions and another thirty-six serving in various other positions.⁴⁵ While the record of Blacks serving on the upper echelons was impressive, more progress needed to be made.

Results of the Sixteen Points Program in Unions of the North American Division from 1970-2001

The total number of African Americans in the echelons of Unions where Black conferences existed in the North American Division had grown after 1970, following the affirmative action's Sixteen Points Program. Black officials in Unions where Black

Review (July 26, August 2, 1990): 745,776,809,840,873,912.

⁴⁴ Nominating Committee Report for Officers and Departmental Directors 1995-2000, *Adventist Review* (July 20-27, 1995): 759,791,847,901,947,950,982.

⁴⁵ Nominating Committee Report for Officers and Departmental Directors 2000-2005, *Adventist Review* (July 2-11, 2000): 983,1027,1047,1079,1111,1143,1175; *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook 2001: Directory of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2001), 20-22,35,67,129,171-172.

conferences existed were comprised of the Atlantic Union Conference, the Columbia Union Conference, the Lake Union Conference, the Mid-America Union Conference, the Southern Union Conference, and the Southwestern Union Conference. By 1971, four Blacks had been elected to the positions of executive secretary, with one elected associate secretary, one elected associate secretary and treasurer, and another eight holding various other positions in these Unions.⁴⁶

In 1976, the number of African Americans in administrative positions remained the same; however the number of officials serving in other capacities increased to eleven in the different unions where [Black] Regional Conferences existed. By 1981, a seed change had occurred with the election in 1980 of the first Black Union president in the Lake Union Conference; otherwise the numerical count was unchanged on the union level. The departmental numbers grew to fourteen in the divergent unions. In 1986, there was still only one Black Union president, with the same number of administrative positions in the various unions. The departmental positions count had increased to seventeen individuals in these unions.⁴⁷

In 1991, there was still only one Black union president with still the same number of administrative slots as before. The departmental count grew to eighteen. By 1996, a second Black union president was elected in the Atlantic Union Conference but was

⁴⁶ *Seventh-day Adventist YEARBOOK*, "A Directory of the General Conference, World Divisions, Union and Local Conferences and Missions, Education, Institutions, Hospitals and Sanitariums, Publishing Houses, Periodicals, and Denominational Workers, Office of Archives and Statistics General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1971), 27,37-38,51,83,94.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, (1976), 31-32,42,56,88,97; (1981), 36,56-57,62-63,89-90,99; (1986), 186,208,214,241-242,251.

forced to resign from office after two years due to serious illness. He was followed by the election of another Black as president. The departmental number increased to twenty in these unions. Another Black was elected a union president of the Columbia Union Conference in 1998. In 2001, there were at least two Blacks who held the position of Union president. In addition at least twenty-four Blacks held departmental positions during this period in the respective unions.⁴⁸ The outstanding increase in the number of Blacks on the union level is indicative of the progress achieved from the initial starting point.

A Comparison of United Methodist and Seventh-day Adventist Churches

By 1996, the United Methodist Church and the Seventh-day Adventist Church (especially in the North American Division) had attained integration at the upper echelon positions in the various church departments and agencies as well as in administrative offices. In fact, there were ten functioning Black United Methodist bishops in the United States plus nine more in Africa. The United Methodists however, fell behind other denominations in producing Black churches and establishing new Black congregations. The promotion of capable African American ministers in the 1970s and 1980s in the United Methodist Church resulted in diminishing of directions of churches on the congregational level. After 1968 and by 1991, in excess of 140,000 Blacks departed the

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, (1991), 186-187,202,207,212,237,247; (1996), 200,204,217,222,244,254; (2001), 174,183-184,190,195,216,226.

United Methodist Church following the disintegration of the totally African American Central Jurisdiction and also of [Black] Annual Conferences.⁴⁹

The five largest denominations widely viewed as the heart of the mainline Protestant denominations experienced their highest membership figures about 1965. During this period to approximately 1990 the Presbyterians declined by a third of their membership, and the Episcopalians almost thirty percent. The United Methodist dropped from 11 million down to 8.7 million, for a net loss of more than 2.3 million or about twenty percent. Worship attendance which stood at 4.3 million 1965 on a regular Sunday dropped to fewer than 3.5 million by 1990. In the same period however, membership in the North American Division of the SDA Church grew from 363,746 in 1965 to 717,446 in 1990. The membership world-wide in the SDA Church went from 1,578,504 in 1965 to 6,694,880 in 1990. While the membership in the five mainline Protestant denominations (including the United Methodist Church) had significantly declined during this period, SDA membership soared.⁵⁰

Another difference between the United Methodist approach and the Seventh-day Adventist approach is that the Methodists had focused on being assimilated into the culture. Thomas Edward Frank made the case that the reason for the Methodist decline in membership was “that United Methodists have been too much assimilated into the wider

⁴⁹ Bilha R. Alegria, “African Bishops of the UMC”, United Methodist Information Service., <http://www.umcom.org/wm/mail/read.htm/> [accessed February 27, 2009]; Kenneth E. Rowe, “Holding Fast/Pressing On 1984 to 1992”, *United Methodism in America: A Compact History*, ed., John G. McEllheny (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 147.

⁵⁰ Thomas Edward Frank, *Polity, Practice, and the Mission of the United Methodist Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 24; Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream*, Second Edition (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2007), 119.

American culture”. According to this point of view, the decline of the Methodist Church is due to a loss of vitality of the church and because of the assimilation of the church into the culture.⁵¹

The United Methodist Church attempted to erase the past injustices of White racism by not only abolishing the Central Jurisdiction in 1968, but, by also abolishing [Black] Annual Conferences which had been entities of mutual support for Black Methodists. Because of the failure to achieve assimilation, it therefore took four additional years to merge the last distinctive Black and White annual conferences in the Deep South (South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas). In its endeavors to bring about the assimilation of Blacks and Whites but also growing numbers of Hispanics, Asians, and others, the fact still remains that the most segregated hour of the week in American society was where these various groups attended their selective churches on Saturdays or Sundays. Frank pointed out that in churches that exerted an effort to incorporate people of a different race, the membership comprised only a small percentage of the overall membership.⁵²

Many Blacks and some White Seventh-day Adventist had come to recognize that the “melting pot” ideal in which ethnic groups would be blended together and much of the distinctiveness assimilated by the predominately White Protestant view of Christian civilizations was not ideal. Adventists had realized that numerous Americans were against assimilation and wanted to preserve their cultural heritage and celebrate their

⁵¹ Frank, *Polity, Practice, and the Mission of the United Methodist Church*, 26.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 82.

ethnic identity. The Adventist Church has come to understand that the term “ethnic minority” which became vogue in the 1970s, assumed that ethnic identities portrayed invariably that one was in a lower position. Frank indicated that the term racial/ethnic, the substitute of the 1980s, conveys that Whites are not racial or ethnic, but only “human.”⁵³

The foremost scholar in the Seventh-day Adventist Church confronting ethical and racial issues is Dr. Calvin B. Rock, former president of Oakwood College and a retired General Vice-president of the General Conference. In an article entitled “Black Seventh-day Adventist and Structural Accommodations” he argued for cultural pluralism over cultural assimilation of Anglo-conformity and the melting pot as theories of assimilation in America. Anglo-conformity refers to total rejection of the cultural heritage of the immigrants and the approval of the conduct and standards of the Anglo-Saxon group. As Rock conveys, the melting pot theory refers to a biological as well as cultural blending. Rock then cites author Norman Hopgood who denotes that cultural pluralism was to encourage differences, not monotony, a place where we ought not to think of all people being alike.⁵⁴

Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart in *Seeking a Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventist and the American Dream* have argued that the assimilation of immigrants on both sides of the conference color line may eventually create a situation that renders the existence of regional conferences superfluous. Bull and Lockhart failed to recognize that the

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 86.

⁵⁴ Calvin B. Rock, ed., “Black SDAs and Structural Accommodations in Perspectives: Black Seventh-day Adventists Face the Twenty-first Century” (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1996), 119-120.

Northeastern Conference existed as an ethnic entity of people of similar backgrounds as did the Greater New York Conference which made regional conferences more necessary than ever before. Bull and Lockhart, based on what was allegedly happening in the Northeastern Conference and the Greater New York Conference, then endeavored to say that regional conferences were obsolete, when nothing could be further from the truth based on overwhelming evidence. The principle of structural accommodation [Black/Regional Conferences] in the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventist was based on this rationale:

1. [Black] conferences enhance vertical mobility among [Black] workers.
2. [Black] conferences enhance lateral mobility among [Black] workers.
3. [Black] conferences enhance relevant planning for Black churches and communities.⁵⁵

The need of [Black] Regional conferences to continue to exist has been enhanced by the argument for cultural pluralistic institutions.

Historical Overview

During the presidential election of 1992, the electorates decided to move on economic concerns rather than social issues. James Carville, Clinton's chief political advisor stated, "It's the Economy, Stupid!" At the commencement of the 1990s and through the decade the primary issue was the economy. The economy undergirded distinction within the society responsible for what was designated as an hourglass proportioned society. Individuals at the summit of society persisted to flourish, however,

⁵⁵ Bull and Lockhart, *Seeking A Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream*, 288-289; Rock, *Perspectives: Black Seventh-day Adventists Face the Twenty-first Century*, 119.

others, embodying the bourgeoisie, were anxious concerning their and their family's perspective. Ultimately, the economy led to the election of Clinton as president.⁵⁶

In February 1993, Clinton signed into law the Family and Medical Leave Act. Clinton requested that Congress abolish the prohibition against homosexuals serving in the armed forces. In spite of public opinion, surveys indicated the majority of Americans were permissive of the homosexual lifestyle, but not accepting of laws supporting gay rights. The attempt to change the bias opposing gays in the armed forces resulted in instant resistance from several entities, the armed forces, and political parties and religious bodies nation-wide. Confronted with the resistance, Clinton backed down and agreed to a compromise. Recruits in the military were not to be questioned about their sexual orientation, but were to refrain from homosexual conduct, an approach that satisfied neither position. During the 1990s differences over the concern of homosexuality faced the United Methodist Church. The 1984 General Conference of the United Methodist Church voted that acknowledged practicing homosexuals could not be ordained or assigned as United Methodist ministers. A significant quadrennial in 1988 General Conference research committee voted in 1992 to not end the prohibition on ordaining practicing homosexuals in United Methodist Church. The controversy over homosexuals existed in both the society at large as well as in United Methodism and the religious world.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Berkin, et al, eds., *Making America: A History of the United States*, 929,966.

⁵⁷ Carol Berkin, et al, eds., *Making America: A History of the United States*, 903; McEllhenny, *United Methodism in America: A Compact History*, 150-151.

While tension existed in the social arena, tension also existed in the economic arena as well. On the economic front, Congress enacted the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with Mexico, Canada, and the United States which eliminated trade barriers and tariffs. It was ratified by the Senate in November, 1993. Clinton also secured ratification of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) which was passed only with the help of Republican votes. In 1993, Clinton obtained Congress' support for a budget that raised taxes on American earnings in excess of \$180,000 a year with vice-president Gore providing the tie-breaking vote in the Senate without the votes of any Republican senators. The budget also increased tax credits for low income families. Republicans under the leadership of Newt Gingrich in 1994 promised in the "Contract with America" to reduce federal spending, particularly on welfare, to balance the budget by 2002, and to promote family values. The electorate reacted by voting in nine additional Republican senators and fifty-two Republican representatives in 1994, giving Republicans the plurality in both houses of Congress for the first time in forty years.⁵⁸

Republicans commenced efforts on an economic plan to cut federal spending on education, welfare, Medicare, Social Security, and the environment. A conflict ensued concerning the budget for 1995 to 1996, with Clinton able to depict a number of elements of the Republicans approach as very drastic measures. The Congress passed its proposal; Clinton vetoed it. Republicans rejected enacting a temporary bill to maintain governmental services. Clinton permitted the closing of all non-vital services of

⁵⁸ Carol Berkin, et al, eds., *Making America: A History of the United States*, 944-945.

government until the Republicans agreed to a compromise and with Clinton receiving most of what he wanted. The Congress took most of the blame for the budget deadlock and government closings.

As the 1996 presidential election drew near, Republicans argued that Clinton's approach sapped the economy; the economy was robust with the Clinton administration producing 10 million jobs and a decrease in poverty. Income for men grew by 4 percent, low-income wages by 6 percent in 1993 to 1998, unemployment shrunk to only 4.1 percent by 1999. Clinton in 1996 was re-elected due to the economy and was prevented from being replaced in office because of the same. By January 2000, Clinton had created over 20 million jobs and the fastest growing economic expansion as well as the longest period of economic expansion in U.S. history. Clinton announced the first budget surplus of 70 billion, the first budget surplus since 1969.⁵⁹

The large issues in the domestic area were confronted, as well as the big issues in the foreign affairs arena by President Clinton. Clinton secured a Palestinian self-rule deal in the area still under Israel's occupation. Clinton aided in the re-establishment of democracy in Haiti. He negotiated the Dayton Agreement signed in Dayton, Ohio in November 1995 by the three major ethnic factions in Bosnia that pledged to stop the four-year old civil war. After negotiations with Milosevic were unfruitful in securing autonomy for the Muslims Albanians, because of ethnic cleansing by Serbian forces, Clinton secured a NATO bombing crusade in March 1999. The campaign resulted in

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 946-949,952.

Milosevic deciding to remove his forces from Kosovo and acknowledged Kosovo's autonomy permitting the United Nations to keep and protect the peace in this region.⁶⁰

On the domestic front, the 2000 presidential election was one of the closest in American history. The 2000 presidential contest between Albert Gore and George W. Bush was clearly not decided for either candidate until the Supreme Court ruled in favor of Bush giving Florida's electoral votes and the presidency to Bush. Bush started out by pushing a tax cut for the wealthy and educational reform. On September 11, 2001 terrorists connected with the Al Qaeda organization launched an attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, killing over three thousand people. The Bush administration reacted by creating the Office of Homeland Security to protect Americans from additional terrorist acts at home, and then established an international alliance to attack terrorist organizations overseas. In October 2001, the United States combined with other troops, including anti-Taliban forces in Afghanistan, to rout the Taliban government along with the Al Qaeda terrorist network.⁶¹

The Commission on the Status and Role of Women Compared with the SDA Church and the Sixteen Points Program

Democracy in church organizations has always been difficult to accomplish. It was not surprising then that the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Evangelical clergy were hesitant to grant lay people representation in its annual conferences and General Conferences, however, by 1904, lay

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 950-952.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 966.

people including women had become voting delegates in the annual conferences and general conferences with voting rights the same as for ministers. In 1972, only 13 percent of lay delegates to the General Conference of United Methodist Church were women, but by 1988, 51 percent of lay delegates were women.⁶²

In 1880, the New York Annual Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church decided to ordain Anna Howard Shaw but her ordination was voided by the General Conference of that denomination although recognized by her annual conference. It was not until 1920 that the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and Evangelical would license women as local preachers, and women were not conferred full ministerial privileges until 1956. By 1972, only 271 women had been ordained as elders. However, in the United Methodist Church, by 1998, about 4,200 women had been ordained to serve as pastors.⁶³ In 1972, only one clergywoman was functioning as a district superintendent; in 1998, 70 clergywomen held that leadership position. In 1972, the United Methodist Church had no women bishops; however by 1980, Marjorie Swank Matthews was elected the first female bishop. In 1984, Leontine Kelly became the first African American woman bishop in a mainline Protestant denomination, but no African American women were appointed as district superintendents until 1990 when three were appointed. By 1998, eleven women were elected bishops after the first female bishop was elected.⁶⁴

⁶² McEllhenny, *United Methodism in America: A Compact History*, 144.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 96,97,144.

⁶⁴ McEllhenny, *United Methodism in America: A Compact History*, 144; Frank, *Polity, Practice, and the Mission of the United Methodist Church*, 88.

In the earliest history of Adventist, women held prominent positions and served as ministers. Although, the SDA Church did not officially ordain Ellen White, as early as 1872 it registered her as an ordained minister so that she could accept full ministerial compensation. Convinced that her ordination proceeded from God, Ellen White was not concerned about the human laying on of hands. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century a number of women served as licensed ministers. Between 1884 and 1904, at least 21 women were listed in the denominational yearbooks as licensed ministers. Numerous other Adventist women participated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's in such elected offices as conference treasurers, conference executives, secretaries, educational department leaders, and Sabbath School department leaders. L. Flori Plummer, who served as secretary of the Iowa Conference in 1897, also was acting conference president for a portion of 1900. She later became the General Conference Sabbath School director in 1913, a position she held for 23 years. During the years between 1871 and 1883 three women served as the treasurer of the General Conference of SDA. Up to the Great Depression of the 1930s, there were women who held prominent positions, but fiscal reduction of personnel removed them in preference of men.⁶⁵

After the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by the U.S. Congress, a discourse commenced concerning women's participation in SDA church matters. The predominant male officers and administrators apparently did not recognize a women's just privilege to

⁶⁵ George R. Knight, *A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventists*, Second Edition (Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2004), 104-106; Richard W. Schwarz and Floyd Greenleaf, *Light Bearers: A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church* (Nampa, Iowa: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2000), 464.

equal compensation under the law. In 1972, Merikay Silver, (McLeod), a White female, functioning as an editorial assistant at the Pacific Press Publishing Association, made inquiry and requested from the manager Leonard Bohner, equal compensation and benefits as her male counterparts. The situation involved Silver's husband Kim, who had lost his job and decided to attend college. This set of circumstances placed her as the primary wage earner, a rarity at that time in an Adventist household but a symbol of differing times. Under different conditions, if, for instance, Merikay Silver had been a male, she would not have had a problem obtaining the special "head of household" stipend granted to head of household due to additional obligations. Silver indicated that Bohner stated that from his perspective the vindication for the differential between males and females rested on what he regarded as appropriate gender roles. Bohner stated to Silver, "Times may be changing but the husband is still head of the house. He should be supporting you. You should be the one going to college....Kim is supposed to be bringing home the bread. If you decided that he'll return to school, why should we then have to raise your salary?"⁶⁶

In January of 1973, after Silver's request was denied, she filed a class action suit suing the Pacific Press Publishing Association for violating the gender clause of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. In August of 1977, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, (EEOC) sued the Pacific Press on behalf of another employee, Lorna Tobler, whose assistance had been critical to Silver's case. Merikay Silver's suit resulted in a \$60,000

⁶⁶ Schwarz and Greenleaf, *Light Bearers: A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, 464; Merikay McLeod, *Betrayal: The Shattering Sex Discrimination Case of Silver vs. Pacific Press Publishing Association* (Loma Linda: Mar Hills Publications, 1985), 52.

out of court settlement in April 1978. About a month afterwards, the EEOC filed a class action suit charging the Pacific Press with civil rights violations and utilizing the testimony and proof from Silver's suit. The federal judge in the lawsuit ordered Pacific Press in December 1982 to reinstate the fired Silver and Tobler and to compensate Tobler \$77,000 in back wages and benefits. In October 1983, the Pacific Press was directed by the court to reimburse its female employees in excess of \$600,000. A consequence of the court decision was that compensation distinctions in the SDA denomination due to gender vanished.⁶⁷

At the same time in the 1970s and 1980s, when Silver and Tobler's cases occurred, issues of women's ordination arose when significant quantities of women commenced functioning as pastors in the SDA church. In 1976, without any indication regarding gender, the General Conference granted licensed ministers the right to baptize and perform weddings. In North America, in 1978, women became elders, and in 1984 the SDA church authorized ordination as local church elders for women world-wide. By the mid 1980s however, women were being hired as commissioned ministers. Unlike licensed ministers they could not officiate at baptisms or weddings and thus remained unordained ministers of the gospel ministry.⁶⁸

In 1985, the Annual Council created a General Conference Women's Ministries Advisory Council to advocate affirmative action supporting women in the various areas

⁶⁷ McLeod, *Betrayal: The Shattering Sex Discrimination Case of Silver vs. Pacific Press Publishing Association*, 338-339; Schwarz and Greenleaf, *Light Bearers: A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, 465.

⁶⁸ Schwarz and Greenleaf, *Light Bearers: A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, 465-466.

of church employment not necessitating ordination. A Commission on the Role of Women advised the SDA church in 1989 against granting ordination as gospel ministers to women, however that the women with adequate instruction be granted the right to conduct regular ministerial duties, such as conducting baptisms and marriages, with the sanction of their division administration. At the 1990 General Conference session in Indianapolis, Indiana the issue of the ordination of women was brought up for an official vote by delegates after almost twelve hours during three days of debate concerning two ordination resolutions. The first ordination amendment allowed for women to be ordained to the gospel ministry. Delegates opposed to the ordination of women prevailed in voting the amendment down by a three to one margin. The vote proceeded according to cultural divisions with the greatest number of delegates from the United States and Western Europe supporting ordination, but the larger delegations from Asia, Latin America and South America and the African divisions rejecting ordination by a large margin. The second amendment was passed by a three to two margin, which would update the Church Manual to permit both licensed and commissioned ministers ordained as local elders to perform marriages with the sanction of their division committee and conduct all the basic duties of the ordained minister, absent their ordination to the gospel ministry. The ordination of women reappeared as an issue at the 1995 General Conference session in Utrecht, Netherland as the North American Division petitioned that divisions that wanted to be permitted to ordain females as gospel ministers in those areas. The SDA church voted down the petition by a vote of three to one.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Schwarz and Greenleaf, *Light Bearers: A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, 466-468; Knight, *A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventists*, 152-153.

The policy of the SDA church on women issues has been at best mixed, contradictory, and inconsistent. The SDA Church permitted women ordination as local church elders with all the rights and privileges thereto. It then grudgingly permitted license and commissioned women who were ordained as local elders to function as ministers under special provision to act as ordained ministers, without being ordained ministers of the gospel. The Sixteen Points affirmative action approach only addressed inequality in racial and ethnic matters but did not address gender discrimination in the SDA Church. The United Methodist Church did confront the transformation in gender connections and the request of women for additional leadership in the church, the 1976 General Conference of the United Methodist Church voted a permanent General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, with comparable committees created in the annual conferences and local churches. The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women was established to address the greater numbers of complaints, charges and civil suits versus male ministers, staff, and laity on the bases of sexual harassment and misconduct in order to create a church that rested on equality.⁷⁰

Conclusion

What African Americans in the Seventh-day Adventist Church had determined unlike African Americans in the United Methodist Church was what H. Richard Niebuhr depicts correctly:

⁷⁰ Knight, *A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventist*, 153-154; Frank, *Polity, Practice, and the Mission of the United Methodist Church*, 89.

Complete fellowship without any racial discrimination has been very rare in the history of American Christianity. It has existed only where the number of [Blacks] belonging to the church was exceptionally small in proportion to the total membership, where the cultural status of the racial groups [or gender groups] was essentially similar, or where as among some Quakers, racial consciousness [or gender consciousness] was consciously overcome.⁷¹

Niebuhr made the profound statement in this respect:

The segregation of the races into distinct churches was not, therefore, wholly a retrogressive step, involving the decline of a previous fellowship. Sometimes it was a forward step from an association without equality, though inadequate, toward the ultimately desirable fellowship of equals.⁷²

It is unlikely that fellowship of equals without distinction based on race or gender will ever be obtained in America or anywhere else.

The North American Division Seventh-day Adventist Black membership greatly increased in 1970 from 63,348 to 225,067 in 2000. The African American membership in the United Methodist Church decreased by about 140,000 in the United States from 1968 to 1991 from around 374,000 to about 234,000 and from 2,853 churches to 2,425 churches. A comparison of the circumstances would lead one to believe that a difference in philosophy and methodology of the United Methodist Church in the assimilation theory of “the melting pot” can explain the significant decline in the Black sector that Methodism experienced. On the other hand, the Seventh-day Adventist philosophy and methodology of the cultural pluralism model provides an explanation for the phenomenal growth of [Black] Regional Conferences experienced in the membership in the North American Division of SDA’s.

⁷¹ Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism*, 253-254.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 254.

The United Methodist Church in contrast to the Seventh-day Adventist Church has experienced women and men obtaining a bigger balance in the privilege of involvement in denominational life during the past thirty years, although there is still an imbalance in positions and influence is obvious by conflict involving Christian faith that includes women's experience. The United Methodist Church has been committed to the empowerment of women and in being an example of a church restoring equality and reciprocity, while the SDA Church position is mixed and inconsistent on the ordination of women and indicates that women are not truly welcome beyond the glass and marble ceilings that has and have been placed over them. The SDA Church has dragged its feet on women's issues and on equality for women in the church. This may be in part due to the cultural differences that various aspects of the church have on the role of women in different societies as well as in the church.⁷³

⁷³ Schwartz and Greenleaf, *Light Bearers: A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, 465-468; Frank, *Polity, Practice, and the Mission of the United Methodist Church*, 89.

CHAPTER V

Conclusion

When the history of Methodism and Adventism are compared there are profound similarities and differences. In this study examination has been made regarding the historical development of Blacks in the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Church, and the United Methodist Church in comparison with the development of Blacks in the Millerite Movement and the Seventh-day Adventist Church—especially through the inter-connected categories of race, religion, and to a lesser extent gender. A rationale has been provided for why the Methodist and Seventh-day Adventist determined it was necessary to establish a distinct organizational structure for African Americans in 1864, 1939, and 1944/1945. In addition, an exploration of the manner in which [Black] Regional SDA Conferences have operated in comparison with the [Black] Central Jurisdiction/[Black] Annual Conferences and White SDA Conferences occurs in the areas of church growth and financial issues, 1940 to 2001. The premise of this study is that the cultural pluralistic approach is superior to the cultural assimilation approach.

In 1743, when Wesley outlined his General Rule guiding societies there was a rule that prevented the purchasing or selling the bodies and souls of men, women, and children with the purpose to enslave them. Methodism began in America in the 1760s mainly among Irish adherents, but also included a number of Black people at its inception in

Maryland, New York and Philadelphia. Wesley's "Thoughts upon Slavery" written in 1772 has been evaluated by various historians as a hard-hitting attack on slavery.¹

Both the Baltimore Conference of Methodist Societies in 1780 and the 1784 at the Christmas General Conference session in Baltimore in which the Methodist Episcopal Church was established voted to denounce slavery. Black Methodist Harry Hosier and Richard Allen were at the Christmas Conference. Six months after the anti-slavery rule's adoption, in June 1785, there was a retreat by Methodists on the slavery issue. In 1844, the slavery issue was finally brought to a head at the commencement May 1, 1844 of the General Conference in New York City which resulted in a split. The denomination that had been conceived sixty years before in Baltimore had now become two separate denominations, one South and one North, over the issue of slavery and would remain such for about a century.²

The Millerite Movement with William Miller, who began preaching full-time in 1834, had a following of 100,000 who believed in Miller's prophetic prediction of the imminent return of Christ on October 22, 1844. Subsequent to the "Great Disappointment" on October 22, 1844, when Christ did not return, the Millerite

¹ John Wesley, "The Nature, Design, and General Rules of the United Societies, 1743," in *The Works of Rev. John Wesley, M.A.*, ed., John Emory, 8 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958-1959), 8: 269-271; Wade C. Barclay, *History of Methodist Missions*, 4 vols. (New York: Board of Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Church, 1949), 1: 268; John Wesley, "Thought Upon Slavery," in *The Anti Slavery Struggle and Triumph in the Methodist Episcopal Church*, ed., Lucas E. Matlock (New York: Phillip and Hunt, 1881), 40.

² John H. Graham, *Black United Methodists: Retrospect and Prospect* (New York: Vantage Press, 1979), 14, 16-18; Harry V. Richardson, *Dark Salvation: The Story of Methodism as It Developed Among Blacks in America* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Press, 1954), 54; John N. Norwood, *The Schism in The Methodist Episcopal Church, 1844: A Study of Slavery and Ecclesiastical Politics* (Alfred, N.Y.: Alfred Press, 1923), 57-62, 100-102.

Movement fragmented. The fact is that the Millerites lineage extends to the Seventh-day Adventist Church; nevertheless, it is significant to understand that there were three distinct groups that existed during that period. One of the smaller entities that asserted the dependability of the 1844 date, however, with a re-explanation of its purpose, was the precursor of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It was also during this period of the Millerite Movement that an extraordinary appeal to African Americans occurred. The Millerite message predicted that the imminent return of Christ to this earth would fulfill the hopes and aspirations of deprived Blacks, when a new social order would be instituted, such as the abolition of slavery.³

From 1833 to 1844, Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians had all encountered divisions over the issue of slavery; the Millerite movement had experienced no such divisions. In the light of the previously stated circumstances the reason the issue of slavery was a non-issue is that there was no official denomination called the Seventh-day Adventist Church at this juncture. Most of the Adventist leaders were strong abolitionists and they would continue to adhere to that position. There was not a southern contingent of the Advent group, so the issue of slavery was not a concern within the Advent Movement as it was in Methodism. Under the compromise of 1850, however, the new Fugitive Slave Law aiding and abetting a runaway slave was punishable by a \$1,000.00 fine or six-month imprisonment. Ellen White instructed Adventists believers to violate

³Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 2 vols. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1972), 1: 580-581.

the law of the land that required surrendering a slave to a slave owner.⁴ Ellen White and John Wesley were clear about their disapproval of slavery and the laws supporting it.

On May 20 to May 23, 1863, the organizational structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church emerged with the General Conference Assembly in Battle Creek, Michigan with twenty delegates from New York, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota. The constitution voted by the church organization included nine articles justifying the conditions to be followed to amend the constitution. The original organization structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church was comprised of a president, a secretary, and a treasurer with the officers' tenure was for a one year period and an executive committee was elected for a one-year period. In the Methodist Church the bishop is elected for a lifetime but can only serve until seventy years of age. Rather than a committee, the bishop decides which circuits or which local churches to assign pastors. The first SDA General Conference Constitution which was voted for the church organization included nine articles specifying the conditions for the church organization and that the amendments shall not conflict with the general constitution of the General Conference of SDA. The General Conference of the Methodist Church and the United Methodist Church is the supreme legislative body in fifteen areas in which the General Conference is granted power, whereas, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church is the highest power for all subordinate organizations and institutions world-wide. The General Conference in the United Methodist Church is subject to Restrictive Rules

⁴ Francis D. Nichols, *The Midnight Cry* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1944), 188; Henrietta Buckmaster, *Flight to Freedom; The Story of the Underground Railroad* (New York: Thomas Y. Cromwell Co., 1958), 103-104; Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9 vols. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), 1: 201-202.

which limited the power of its General Conference, however, there are no such restrictions in the SDA Church. The SDA General Conference has the last word in all areas where a different perspective exists.⁵

The newly created Methodist Episcopal Church had no procedures to prevent the segregation that occurred among its members. Segregation of Blacks in worship services and worship societies continued. The first segregated galleries or “African corners,” were introduced in 1787, and became the practice in Methodist Churches in the North and South and these practices were imposed by Whites. The Seventh-day Adventist Church, in contrast to the Methodist Episcopal Church, opted for their own meeting house for Blacks and not for segregated worship in the same building, especially in the South in 1890, about 100 years after the Methodists. In 1895, Ellen G. White wrote from Australia: “In regard to Whites and [Blacks] worshipping in the same building, this cannot be followed as a general custom with profit to either party-especially in the South. The best thing will be to provide [Black] people who accept the truth with places of worship of their own.”⁶

In Methodism a sizable increase in Black membership resulted from the outreach of Harry Hosier, widely known as “Black Harry” a circuit-riding preacher whose fame exceeded that of Bishop Francis Asbury and other White preachers of that period, although Hosier could neither read nor write. Henry Evans, a great Black preacher and

⁵ John Byington, “Report of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Review and Herald*, (May 26, 1863); 204-206; Thomas Edward Frank, *Polity, Practice, and the Mission of the United Methodist Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 214; Jack M. Tuell, *The Organization of the United Methodist Church*, revised ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1982), 27, 155.

⁶ Holland N. McTyeire, *A History of Methodism* (Nashville: Publishing House, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1924), 584; Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9 vols. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), 9:206.

evangelist who possessed both the talent of preaching was also talented in church organization. Evans was responsible for establishing the Fourth Street Church in Wilmington, Delaware and for being the Father of the Methodist Church, White and Black, in Fayetteville, North Carolina.⁷

Church Historian William Warren Sweet who indicated that Stewart's ministry to the Wyandotte Indians resulted in the Methodist Episcopal Church "Home Missions". This special "Home Missions" organization was established at the Methodist Episcopal General Conference of 1820. William Capers who later became a bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church from 1829 onward was the chief advocate of outreach or of "Missions to the Slaves". Imperfect as the "Mission" way was, it still overall was more positive than negative.⁸

In a similar vein to the Methodist's, White Adventist pioneer, Robert Kilgore confronted the thorny issue of race in the South from 1877 to 1885. As a favorable result of positive feedback from his work in the southern vineyard, Kilgore set the policy concerning the issue of race for the SDA Church denominations at the 1890 General Conference. The policy Kilgore advocated was to form separate churches for Blacks to circumvent the prejudice against them by Whites.⁹

⁷ Warren Thomas Smith, *Harry Hosier: Circuit Rider* (Nashville, TN: The Upper Room, 1981), 27; John H. Graham, *Black United Methodists: Retrospect and Prospect*, 3; William M. Wightman, *Life of William Capers, D.D., Including an Autobiography* (Nashville: Southern Methodist Publishing, 1859), 127.

⁸ Joseph Mitchell, *The Missionary Pioneer, John Stewart, Man of Color* (New York: J. Emory and B. Waugh, 1827; William Warren Sweet, *Methodism in American History* (New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1933), 190; Wightman, *Life of William Capers, D.D., Including an Autobiography*, 290-291, 80.

⁹ Arthur W. Spalding, *Origins and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, 4 vols. (Washington, DC.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1961), 2: 187-188.

James Edson White, a White Adventist pioneer, the son of Ellen G. White and James White stands head and shoulder above the rest regarding race relations. White decided to build a riverboat to sail down the Mississippi River to work for the cause of Black people. In spite of barriers of all kinds, the work grew so that in about ten years following its commencement there were about fifty small schools in six states and thus an approach was formulated for higher education for more advanced Black students. The ultimate result of Edson's efforts was the emergence of a group of Black pastors and teachers and the work for Blacks in the South beginning to flourish.¹⁰

Charles M. Kinney was the first Black SDA to be ordained to the gospel ministry. In 1889, he was ordained at a campmeeting in Nashville, Tennessee. At Kinney's ordination he addressed the idea of Black self-determination within the SDA church structure. Kinney recommended that a different course be followed with not only separate congregations but separate conferences for Blacks and Whites. Kinney predicted [Black] Regional Conferences some fifty-five years before their existence.¹¹

The General Conference of the Methodist Church gathered in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on May 2, 1864. One of the objectives at the General Conferences was a program to evangelize Black freedmen in the South through missionaries and teachers. Since the split between the Northern and Southern Methodist Episcopal Church, Blacks had pushed for the establishment of their own Annual Conferences and missions. The

¹⁰ Arthur W. Spalding, *Captains of the Host: A History of Seventh-day Adventists 1845-1900*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1949), 1: 637-638; Ronald D. Graybill, *Mission to Black America: The True Story of Edson White and the Riverboat Morning Star* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1971), 641.

¹¹ Charles M. Kinney, *SDA Encyclopedia*, 10:871; *Minutes of the District Workers' Meeting*, Nashville, Tennessee SDA Campmeeting Campground, October 2, 1889.

first Black mission conference established was the Delaware Conference on July 29, 1864, the second Black mission conference established was the Washington Conference on October 27, 1864 and other Black conferences were established until there were nineteen Black Annual Conferences.¹²

In 1894, there were about fifty Black Seventh-day Adventists. By 1909, the Black SDA membership was 900. It became obvious an organizational change was necessary for the advancement of the efforts to evangelize Blacks. In 1909, the concept of creating a [Black] Regional Conference was rebuffed for a plan to form a Negro Department in the SDA Church.¹³

The drive for the selection of a Black to Episcopal leadership began in 1868 and continued in 1880, 1896, 1900 all the way to 1920. A resolution was passed and the request for a Black bishop was sent to the Committee on Episcopacy, where two African Americans, Robert E. Jones and Mathew W. Clair, Sr. were elected to the position of bishops over Black Annual Conferences. The first three executive secretaries of the Negro Department were White. The first Negro Department secretary was J. W. Christian, the second, was A. J. Haysmer, and the third, was C. B. Stevenson. Finally, in 1918, at the General Conference session, William H. Green, a brilliant attorney who had argued cases before the U.S. Supreme Court, was elected the first African American secretary of the North American Negro Department and the first African American on the

¹² Graham, Black United Methodist: *Retrospect and Prospect*, 33-40.

¹³ "The North American Negro Department," *General Conferences Bulletin*, thirty-eight session, vol. 17, no. 5 (May 21, 1913): 77-79.

General Conference staff of SDA.¹⁴ The first Black bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church over a Black Methodist Annual Conference occurred some fifty-six years after 1864, while the first executive secretary of the Negro Department in the SDA Church occurred 9 years after 1909 when the department was established.

Schism involving prominent Black ministers, Lewis C. Sheafe, John W. Mann, and James K. Humphrey prompted organization and structural changes in the SDA Church. A difference of opinion existed over the failure to fulfill the “separate but equal” doctrine which the SDA leadership chose to follow for the church. While the SDA Church raised \$10,000 for a White Congregation, Second Seventh-day Adventist Church, and there was a drive to acquire \$100,000 to erect a new church building for the newly acquired General Conference Takoma Park Office. The Black People’s Church in 1906 made a request to build a training school and treatment center for Blacks but their petition was delayed and then denied. So that in February, 1907, the People’s Church declared its local church’s independence from the General Conference organization, while preserving Adventist doctrines and traditions. The first separation from the SDA Church apparatus happened in 1907 and led to the establishment of the North American Negro Department in 1909. After returning back to the SDA church and assuming a pastoral responsibility in Los Angeles California, Sheafe became involved in a dispute with the Southern California Conference over the writing of Ellen G. White on racial matters in Volume 9

¹⁴ Grant S. Shockley, ed., *Heritage and Hope: The African-American Presence in United Methodism* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 86-87; “Report of the Negro Department” *General Conferences Bulletin*; Thirty-ninth session, vol. 8, no. 5 (April 15, 1918): 76; Walter Fordham, *Righteous Rebel* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1999), 67.

of the Testimonies. Two years after Sheafe's ministry had resumed in the SDA Church, it was all over.¹⁵

In July 1916, Sheafe returned to the People's Church to conduct an evangelic meeting at the invitation of the church's pastor Fred Seeney, along with the then denominational pariah, A.T. Jones, (an opponent of the SDA Church structure) and this affiliation closed the door to the possibility of Sheafe resuming with the SDA organization. With Sheafe at the forefront, the People's Church proclaimed its independence from the SDA Church structure in February, 1917, ten years to the same month following Sheafe's first departure. After his second departure which happened in 1917, the General Conference that had previously appropriated no dollars for the People's Church request in Washington, suddenly appropriated \$18,000 for the property of a church and school building for the new Ephesus Church congregation. It is ironic following the second separation which occurred in 1917, a sea-change in the leadership of the North American Negro Department happened in 1918. At the General Conference session of 1918 William H. Green was elected the first African American Secretary of the North American Negro Department and served as the first Black on the General Conference staff. He was denied access to an office in the General Conference unlike his White colleagues.¹⁶ The Lewis Sheafe incident shows that the Adventist Church had the opportunity to be in the forefront and not the rear in demonstrating through the

¹⁵ Doug Morgan, "Lewis Sheafe: Adventism's Forgotten Apostle to Black America," *Paper presented to the Association of Seventh-day Adventist Historians*, April 20, 2007, 6-7, 10-11.

¹⁶ R. Clifford Jones, "In Search of Utopia: James K. Humphrey and the Seventh-day Adventist," *A paper presented to the Association of Seventh-day Adventist Historians*, (April 21, 2007), 3.

fundamental truths how to handle racial concerns in the SDA Church's intrinsic conduct.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church had the occasion to make evident by illustrating through its action the organization was opposed to the racism criss-crossing other denominations and the whole of American society.

Around 1920, John W. Manns, an outstanding African American Seventh-day Adventist pastor in Savannah, Georgia, encountered problems with denominational policy concerning racial issues and the detachment between its words and actions. Manns, similar to Humphrey, was a minister of tremendous ability who had directed the progress of various SDA congregations in the South. In the cluster of churches he produced was the Savannah Church. Manns directed the Savannah congregation to maintain the deed for the church's property, in contradiction to denominational policy. SDA Church leaders endeavored to pressure Manns to relinquish the deed, but Mann's formal response pointed out that the denominational regulation was both racist and not biblical. The consequence was that the Savannah Church was dismissed from the sisterhood of congregations in the last portion of 1920. Moreover, Mann's ministerial credentials were revoked by the SDA Church.¹⁷

Mann indicated that when it came to racial issues that the SDA denominational leaders were willing to do almost anything to avoid having to address racial prejudice by White people against Blacks. Church Historian Arthur Spalding in his unpublished manuscript "Lights and Shades in the Black Belt" indicated concerning racial matters

¹⁷ R. Clifford Jones, James K. Humphrey and the Sabbath-Day Adventists (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2006), 23; J. W. Manns, *Why Free Seventh-day Adventists?* (n.p., Banner Publishing Association, n.d.), 4.

how church leaders should deal with these concerns. He wrote “that in conditions which do not involve transgression of God’s law...His Christian experience should not lead him to start a crusade against customs which do not interfere with the Christian’s duty. It may be said that the attitude of Seventh-day Adventist in this matter is shaped by policy instead of principles. It’s a principle of policy instead of a principle of pleasure.”¹⁸

James K. Humphrey, like John W. Manns, a talented evangelist and minister, conducted a number of tent meetings in New York City, between 1920 and 1927, baptizing more than 300 individuals. During almost the entire length of Humphrey’s ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, he made the denomination’s leadership aware of racial issues. Humphrey urged for a change that would result in self-determination for Blacks and he remained hopeful that the SDA Church, verbal expressions and conduct would correspond with each other. As the 1920s ended, Humphrey’s patience also ended. Humphrey concluded that the SDA Church was not committed to bring about important changes in the circumstances faced by African Americans within the organization.¹⁹

The disappointment of Humphrey with the SDA Church leadership may be viewed in regards to all the unkept pledges and commitments of the SDA Church. At the Fall Council attended by Humphrey in 1926, a recommendation was voted to address the need of the colored work by developing a boarding academy for Black young people in the North. Nothing occurred regarding this proposed recommendation at the General

¹⁸ Arthur W. Spalding, *Lights and Shades in the Black Belt*, (unpublished book manuscript, E.G. White Publications Office Document File:376.0, Washington, D.C., 1924), 142.

¹⁹ Jones, “In Search of Utopia: James K. Humphrey and the Seventh-day Adventist,” 1, 3-4.

Conference session and Fall Council of 1926. At the Spring Council in 1929 at the General Conference in Washington, D.C., Black leaders held a meeting and offered a recommendation that Blacks be permitted to organize [Black] conferences. These [Black] conferences would have the same relationship to the union and General Conferences as White conferences. During the 1929 Spring Council, the General Conference Committee refused to adopt the recommendation, but they did not reject it totally. Instead, the General Conference Committee elected a special committee to assess the wisdom of the recommendation to give a presentation and suggestion to the Fall Council slated for September 24 to October 2, 1929 in Columbus, Ohio. The special committee which was to investigate whether to recommend [Black] conferences was comprised of eleven Whites but only five Blacks. The special committee gave a report which suggested that the Fall Council should rebuff the Black leaders' suggestions, and the Fall Council voted overwhelmingly to deny the formation of Black Conferences. It was stated that White leaders, in derogatory words said, "[Black] Conferences are out of the question. Don't ever ask for a [Black] Conference again."²⁰

Even as a member of the special committee after the Spring Council in 1929, Humphrey was already convinced of the Fall Council outcome, thus he pursued the idea of an all-Black commune. The proposal for the Utopia Park Health Benevolent Association was comparable with Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association in a rough sort of way. It was Humphrey's dream of establishing a commune where African Americans could excel and experience a measure of self-sufficiency and it

²⁰ "Colored School in the North, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, vol. 103, no. 54; Walter Fordham, *Righteous Rebel* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1999), 71-72.

was due to his disillusionment with SDA Church leadership that prompted him to proceed forward. Greater New York Conference president Louis K. Dickerson incorrectly stated that the business meeting of November 2, 1929 was at the bidding of Humphrey, which was false. Dickerson then asserted disingenuously that Humphrey had been selected to serve on a special committee by the 1929 Spring Council to inquire into the likelihood of having [Black] conferences and the pastor had failed to participate in a single committee meeting. Dickerson knew when he stated this that the Fall Council had already met and voted overwhelming against [Black] Conferences. The First Harlem SDA Church after five boisterous hours voted 695 to 5 in support of Humphrey as their pastor and leader.²¹

The Utopia Park business meeting situation results were due in large measure to Seventh-day Adventist leaders' inability to understand the significant role of the African American ministers in the Black community. The virtually unanimous backing that Humphrey obtained from his members was not a consequence of a credulity that possibly could be employed by a beguiling religious leader, but it was the consequence of deep affection and the respect Black members have for their ministers from a historic perspective. Denominational leaders, in addition, misunderstood the societal forces involved in the Black community during the 1920s. This period had elements of the Harlem Renaissance and Pan-Africanism which connected it with Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association, the first mass Black Working Class Movement in America which stressed economic and political self-determination. Both

²¹ Jones, *James K. Humphrey and the Sabbath-Day Adventists*, 15-16; Jones, "In Search of Utopia: James K. Humphrey and the Seventh-day Adventist," 5-6.

Garvey and Humphrey wished that African Americans would throw off the band of oppression that had prevented their drive to self-determination and independence.²²

The revoking of Humphrey's ministerial credentials and the dropping of the First Harlem SDA Church from the Greater New York Conference failed to stop Humphrey's push for Black agency in the SDA Church. Humphrey's own experience aroused Seventh-day Adventist Blacks to pursue their independence in the organization. What occurred with Humphrey in the SDA Church provided evidence of the frailty of racial concerns in the SDA Church during this period and the fact that racial difficulties were not confined to the South. The SDA denomination could not deny the fact that African Americans faced hardship in their thirst for equality in America as well as in the SDA organization. Humphrey and the Utopia Park affair operated as an incentive that pushed for the development of regional conference fifteen years hence and had an impact on racial issues in the SDA Church. In comparison to Sheafe, Manns, Humphrey, and various others, African American Adventists have put Adventist association ahead of a solution to racial issues, but have at the same time labored to resolve and cure racial matters from the inside of the SDA Church.²³

Unification endeavors occurred following the split in the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1844 after the Civil War and Reconstruction in 1876. The accounts of the Joint Commission's meetings in 1918, involved the status of the African American membership in a 688 page account in an

²² Jones, "In Search of Utopia: James K. Humphrey and the Sabbath-Day Adventist," 7; Jones, James K. Humphrey and the Sabbath-Day Adventists, 41-42.

²³ Jones, "In Search of Utopia: James K. Humphrey and the Seventh-day Adventist," 1, 8.

attempt for church reunification. Bishop Earl Cranston of the Methodist Episcopal Church described this perspective: “It was thought that if we could come to an agreement as to the status of the [Blacks] the other matters will adjust themselves to correspond to that understanding.”²⁴

Several distinct perspectives developed in the presentation of the Joint Commission on Unification. One viewpoint, stated by northern and southern supporters, was that African Americans not remain in the Methodist Church, but in an African Association of General Conference. A different perspective of the northern backers was against yielding up the advantages and privileges of African Americans to acquire unification. The final perspective of some African Americans, who endeavored to support the strong connotation of friendship in Methodism, was that they were ready to offer concessions to aid with unification.²⁵

The Plan of Union was voted by the 1924 Methodist Episcopal Church; however, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South secured the majority vote, not the three-fourth vote required for adoption of the plan. The underlining cause of the 1924 Plan not being adopted was that it insisted on “social equality” for African Americans. In 1936, a Plan of Union was presented at the Methodist Episcopal Church General Conference in Columbus, Ohio. During this General Conference, a two-hour debate regarding charges of discrimination toward African American ministers occurred. At the 1936 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church a vote for the Plan of Union prevailed 470

²⁴ Dwight W. Culver, *Negro Segregation in the Methodist Church* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1953), 60-61.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 63 67.

to 83. Of the assembled delegates thirty-one White delegates and fifty-two African Americans voted in opposition to the plan.²⁶

On May 23, 1936, the Methodist Protestant Church adopted the Plan of Union at the General Conference at High Point, North Carolina by a vote of 142 to 39. Some Methodist Protestants who opposed the Plan of Union did so due to causes not based on segregation but against Episcopal leadership based on any kind of centralized power. The General Conference session of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in Birmingham, Alabama, in April, 1938 adopted the Plan of Union by a vote of 334 to 26.²⁷

The Plan of Union was furnished a theological foundation from Dean Albert C. Knudson of the Boston University School of Theology, who endorsed the concept that racial segregation could be justified theologically:

The only social basis for denouncing all social separation or segregation as un-Christian is to be found in the theory of racial amalgamation. Those who favor amalgamation think God made a mistake in creating different races or that he had nothing to do with their creation...The theory of racial amalgamation is not a Christian theory. The Christian theory is the theory of racial self-respect. It holds that God created the different races, that He had purpose in so doing, and that each has its contribution to make toward the total life of mankind, not through racial elimination, but through racial education and self-development is the divine purpose to be realized...The Christian view of God as Creator leads us to look with reverence and respect upon every race, and especially upon the race in whose bosom God has given us life...²⁸

Church Historian William McClain indicates that Knudson neglected to comprehend that “God did, indeed, make every being to be proud of the blessing of his or

²⁶ Shockley, *The African-American Presence in United Methodism*, 112; Culver, *Negro Segregation in the Methodist Church*, 68-70.

²⁷ Culver, *Negro Segregation in the Methodist Church*, 76-77.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 73.

her features, but not to place a value on them above the features of others. Knudson, however, by supporting such a stance was saying that God supported oppression of the races, not, through racial elimination, which Knudson incorrectly saw as the opposite of racial separation, but racial segregation and the superiority of one group over another.”²⁹

Delegates at the Uniting General Conference on May 10, 1939, in Kansas City, Missouri, arrived from the three denominations, pronounced the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church would be called “The Methodist Church.” Methodism was divided into six Jurisdiction Conferences in the United States. Five of the Jurisdiction Conferences, (Jurisdictional Conferences are comprised of a number of representatives or delegates of annual conferences in geographically constituted regions), were the Northeastern, the Southeastern, the North Central, and South Central, and the Western. The sixth was the Central Jurisdiction which was comprised of nineteen [Black] Annual Conferences of the former northern Methodist Episcopal Church. For the first time, by any definition, the Central Jurisdiction was a racially segregated jurisdiction and that racial segregation was written into the Constitution of the Methodist Church. A separate jurisdiction for African Americans was a new factor in Methodist unification, but separate [Black] Annual Conferences were not new. The sixth jurisdiction had the right to elect its own bishops, the right to establish its own policies and procedures, and have equal representations on the national boards and committees established by the General Conference. Black

²⁹ William B. McClain, *Traveling Lights: Christian Perspective on Pilgrimage and Pluralism* (New York: Friendship Press, 1981), 34, 71-75.

delegates voted overwhelmingly to reject the Plan of Union, while White delegates voted decisively for it.³⁰

The Methodist Church in establishing the Central Jurisdiction surrendered to American racist inclinations. No longer was the church willing to confront the culture and view itself as a reformer of culture on racial issues; instead, it became one with the dominant society. It became the American church reproducing the disposition and habits of the wider culture. Instead of uprooting the problems in society and the church, Methodists became an endorser of the status quo with all its injustices.

Lincoln and Mamiya have employed the “dialectical model” of the Black Church to describe the six parts that are engaged in a continual sequence of tensions in their investigation of [Black] Regional Conferences/Black SDA Churches compared with Black United Methodist Churches. The first is the dialectic between the priestly and prophetic aspects. The Methodists’ primary focus is the priestly duties where worship and church maintenance capacity are the main obligations. The Seventh-day Adventists aptly describe a message to be declared of God’s judgment to the world and a further revelation or illumination of God’s purpose.³¹

The second is the dialectical between “other worldly” versus “this-worldly.” “Other-worldly” refers to being mainly concerned with heaven and eternal life, a pie-in-the-sky outlook that avoid political and social issues. Historically, for the most part, the

³⁰ Culver, *Negro Segregation in the Methodist Church*, 69, 78, 81; Tuell, *The Organization of the United Methodist Church*, 30.

³¹ Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 1:575-576, 579-582; C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African-American Experience* (Durham, NC.: Duke University Press, 1990), 1.

SDA Church has avoided public issues involving both political and social matters rather emphasizing the “other-worldly” rather than “this worldly” viewpoint. The Methodist Church has historically emphasized a “this-worldly” perspective. At the unity conference, combining the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Protestant, and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South into the Methodist Church in 1939, the Methodist voted a resolution “in opposition to the spirit of war raging in the world.” The Methodist Church assumed a “this-worldly” stance.³²

The third is the dialectic between universalism and particularism. Lincoln and Mamiya indicate that Black churches mirror the dialectical tensions between the universalism of the Christian message and the particularism of their racial history. The [Black] SDA Churches and [Black] Regional Conferences and [Black] United Methodist Churches after the vital turning point of Civil Rights Movement, 1954 to 1968 stressed both the universalism of the Christian message and particularism of their racial heritage.³³

The fourth is the dialectic between the communal and the privatistic. The communal area is concerned with the [Black] Regional Conferences/Black SDA Churches and [Black] United Methodist Churches being involved in all aspects of their members’ lives, which includes the political, economic, educational, and social matters. Because of the communal facets of the dialectic in the [Black] United Methodist Churches and [Black] Regional Conferences/Black SDA Churches, the privatistic

³²Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African-American Experience*, 12; John G. McEllhenny, ed., *United Methodism in America: A Compact History* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1992), 119.

³³ Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African-American Experience*, 12-13.

concern is seen to a lesser degree, which points to an absence of concern regarding the broader community's focus on confronting only the spiritual needs of its adherents.³⁴

The fifth is the dialectic between charismatic and bureaucratic. Rather than charismatic or magnetic sorts of individuals, the [Black] United Methodist Churches and the [Black] Regional Conferences/Black SDA Churches possess a more bureaucratic tendency. To a greater degree this is because of the organizational structure of the United Methodist and SDA Church.³⁵

The sixth is the dialectic between resistance and accommodation. As suggested previously, African American Seventh-day Adventists and African American United Methodists decided on peaceful co-existence or accommodation instead of breaking the connection with their church organization. Black churches and institutions have been and are involved in resistance which involves opposing the pressures of American society by affirming the African American cultural heritage. The resistance aspects in the [Black] United Methodist Church sector involves supporting the Black Methodist for Church Renewal Movement and for Black SDA Churches backing [Black] Regional Conferences which shows resistance and are comprised of both self-determination and self-affirmation.³⁶

At the 1941 Fall Council, Elder G.E. Peters, newly elected General Conference Regional Secretary rendered a tremendous statement:

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

Brother Chairman, I believe that we are all convinced that the Negro Department has made wonderful advances and achievements through the years. We have grown from 900 believers in 1909 to 14,537 at the close of 1940. In 1923 the receipts were \$16,323 from the Colored constituency; during the past five years 1936 to 1940 the tithe paid was \$1,112,000. In the same period, offerings amounted to \$703,000 as compared with \$3,000 in 1912. Would you not agree that Colored Seventh-day Adventist is more an asset than a liability? Looking over records from foreign mission work, we find conclusively that larger dividends are realized by the body when leadership roles are entrusted to native workers. It is obvious from the statistics that the Colored work has made greater advances on souls won and money gains, since the work has been shouldered by Colored workers.”³⁷

Peters provided evidence of the progress that resulted from Blacks having limited control of their affairs.

Due to the overall circumstances in the United States, concern with the Great Depression and also particularly World War II, in the area of race no consequential activity occurred between 1930 and 1943. In 1943, a life-long Adventist, a Mrs. Lucy Byard, a fair-skinned African American woman from Brooklyn, New York, was taken to the Washington Sanitarium. Initially, Mrs. Byard was admitted; however, prior to medical attention being provided, the admission clerk indicated to her there was an error in her admission when her racial heritage was discovered. Byard, without the benefit of an examination or medical attention concerning her physical health, stayed in the hallway of the hospital until moved by cab to the Freeman Hospital where she subsequently expired due to pneumonia. The Byard incident, along with other examples of racial bias, stirred up African American members, especially in the Washington area, to urge the

³⁷ Fordham, *Righteous Rebel*, 140.

General Conference to provide a guarantee this kind of situation would not be repeated again.³⁸

In 1944, a number of African American laymen from the Ephesus Church in Washington formed a committee, the National Association for the Advancement for a World-wide Work among Colored Seventh-day Adventists. The major thrust of the committee was to end racial quotas in SDA schools, to confront the lack of African Americans on the different levels of the church structure, and to ensure free admittance for African Americans into the sanitariums and hospitals of the SDA Church. The committee, in a document referred to as “Shall the Four Freedoms Function among Seventh-day Adventist?” indicated that non-Adventist institutions in Maryland, for example, John Hopkins Hospital and the Sandy Springs Hospital, admitted African American patients which meant that Adventists were behind secular entities in their racial practices. As had Humphrey and Mann, the committee dealt with the issue of property bought by African American churches. The property deeds were being held solely by the White legal associations with no African American membership representing the conference legal association that held the deeds interest. The committee put in place the demand of African American representation on important committees, whether on the local, union, or General Conferences level.³⁹

³⁸ Louis B. Reynolds, *We Have Tomorrow: The Story of American Seventh-day Adventists with an African Heritage* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1984), 293-294; Jacob Justice, *Angels in Ebony* (Toledo, OH.: Jet Printing Service, 1975), 43-46.

³⁹ Joseph T. Dodson, Chair, “Shall the Four Freedoms, Function Among Seventh-day Adventist?” *Committee for the Advancement of a World-Wide Work among Colored Seventh-day Adventists* (Washington, DC.: General Conference Archives, 1944), 2-3.

The document was asking for some indication of meaningful integration in the structure of the SDA Church. It was asking for at least one General Conference clerical office job and other little symbols of total integration. Suggestions were made regarding SDA sanitariums, hospitals and education institutions that they discontinue the un-biblical and un-Christian policies and practices of discrimination against [African American] people and that quotas at our institution of higher learning be stopped. The circumstances involving the Washington Sanitarium and Hospital lit the fire that resulted in the forming of regional conferences. The issue of regional conferences was under review and contemplation prior to the spring meeting in Chicago, April 8-14, 1944.⁴⁰

Elder J.L. McElhaney, General Conference president, in fact was the one who presented the matter of separate conferences. He summoned a limited number of Black laymen and Black ministers as well as local conference and union presidents to examine whether to form Black conferences. Elder McElhaney chaired this special Pre-Spring Council meeting and conveyed to the delegates that the General Conference had taken under consideration the question of Black conferences. A consensus developed that it was essential that African Americans be provided a significant place in the church structure.⁴¹

It was Elder George Peters who urged Elder McElhaney to present the idea because it would be more propitiously accepted if it came from one of the strongest advocates of Black Conferences, who was the General Conference president. In an effective

⁴⁰ Dodson, Chair, "Shall the Four Freedoms Function Among Seventh-day Adventist?" 3, 6-7; *Minutes*, Pre-Spring Council, Chicago, Illinois (April 8, 1944), 1-2.

⁴¹ *Minutes*, Pre-Spring Council, Chicago, Illinois (April 8, 1944), 1-2.

presentation, McElhaney stated, “To me it is wonderful to see that the [Blacks] have large churches efficiently headed and directed by [Black] men. We have some [Black] churches with more members than we have in some conferences. I think our Colored men do a very good job. This gives me confidence in their being leaders. To say that a man could be a pastor of a 1,000 member church but couldn’t direct a 1,000 membership church if they were divided into conferences seems to be inconsistent in reasoning.”⁴²

As a result, on April 10, 1944, a special committee commissioned to study the feasibility of Black conferences offered recommendations to the special meeting. It was voted unanimously by the special Pre-Spring Council meeting that Black conferences be formed in unions with a sizable African American membership and that these conferences that have the same status and relationship as White conferences in their respective unions.⁴³

African American delegates, of the Lake Union Conference on September 26, 1944, at 10:00 a.m., voted “to organize the Lake Union Conference [Black] members into a [Black] conference. The selected name for the new conference was “Lake Region Conference.” Subsequently the Northeastern, Allegheny, South Atlantic, South Central, South West, and the Central States Conferences were formed. All of the above mentioned conferences were formed between 1944 and 1952.⁴⁴

⁴² *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

⁴⁴ *Minutes of the First Meetings of the Delegates of the Black Constituency of the Lake Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventist at Shiloh Church, Chicago, IL (September 26, 1944)*, 1-4; Reynolds, *We Have Tomorrow: The Story of American Seventh-day Adventists with an African Heritage*, 303-315.

At the General Conference of the Methodist Church in 1960, a delegate of the Central Jurisdiction, Dr. Harold Case, offered an amendment (to eliminate the Central Jurisdiction) which was defeated. Thereafter, the Central Jurisdiction selected a committee of five whose duty was to provide a method to eliminate the Central Jurisdiction. The basic principles by which the Central Jurisdiction was to be abolished were:

1. The fundamental objectives in the dissolution of the Central Jurisdiction must be defacto inclusiveness in the Methodist Church.
2. The minimum requirement for defacto inclusiveness is the absence on all levels of church life of patterns and policies based on race.
3. Each step taken to dissolve the Central Jurisdiction must be an integral part of an overall plan or program to abolish all forms of racial segregation and discrimination from the Methodist Church.⁴⁵

The main item of interest of the General Conference session of April 1964, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania was the dissolution of the Central Jurisdiction. The General Conference voted a number of amendments to the dissolution process. First, all local churches should be opened to all persons without regard to race or national origin, or economic condition. Second, Central Jurisdictional Conference would realign its conferences geographically so no conference boundaries or area would be located in any other regional jurisdiction. Third, in order to assume the burden of inadequate salaries and pensions in the Central Jurisdiction, the 1964 General Conference created a Temporary General Aid Fund. And, four, a Jurisdictional Advisory Council would be created to work within each jurisdiction to deal with matters related to the questions of

⁴⁵ Grant S. Shockley, ed., *Heritage and Hope: The African American Presence in United Methodism* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 202-203.

transfers and mergers.⁴⁶ These were the actions of the 1964 General Conference of Methodist which began the process of the elimination of the Central Jurisdiction. The Central Jurisdiction was eliminated by 1967 and most of the [Black] Annual Conferences were absorbed into White conferences and into the newly established United Methodist Church in 1968. The cultural “assimilation model” shows when [Black] Annual Conferences were absorbed into the United Methodist Church, serious decline in the Black segment of the United Methodist Church began. So the assimilation model indicates that United Methodists went too far, from legal segregation and separation, to shed all distinguishing actions to accept White American values. The United Methodist Church sought an assimilationist or integrationist approach and the elimination of racial or ethnic differences.⁴⁷ This was a fatal mistake by the United Methodist Church.

The Methodist Church established a Temporary General Aid Fund to subsidize the salaries and pensions for the transferring pastors from the Central Jurisdiction/ [Black] Annual Conferences. While, the Methodist Church developed a temporary fund for their African American pastors, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist under the Sixteen Points Program developed a new permanent program known as the “Regional Capital Reversion Fund,” to revert funds back from each union. Twenty percent of union conferences’ tithe funds received from [Black] Regional Conferences and Regional churches would be reverted back to [Black] Regional Conferences. The General Conference of SDA’s thought the “Regional Capital Reversion fund” would provide

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 205.

⁴⁷ Richard T. Schaefer, *Racial and Ethnic Groups*, ninth edition (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc. 2004), 25-26.

some degree of economic equality for [Black] Regional Conferences compared with their White SDA Conference's counterparts.⁴⁸ The Methodist Church and the United Methodist Church failed to see that it was necessary to establish a permanent program for its Black pastors and Black churches in the Methodist Church structure. The quite significant fact is that the Black-White income gap over the last fifty years 1950-2000 indicates that median Black family income has been and continues to be about fifty-seven percent of White family income.⁴⁹ The impact on Blacks in the United Methodist Church has been that the majority of Black ministers have had to work another job to provide for their families, which has meant they have not been able to devote full time to their ministry. This has resulted in a disadvantage for them between their ministry and that of their White colleagues.

[Black] Regional Conferences established in 1944/1945 were instituted differently from the way the Central Jurisdiction was created in the Methodist Church in 1939. The Central Jurisdiction was based solely on race. [Black] Regional Conferences would have and has the same status and relationship as White SDA Conferences and are tied to union conferences within their own geographical locations. The Central Jurisdiction was composed of nineteen [Black] Annual Conferences in distinct geographical areas and it rested only on racial segregation in large degree based on the 1896 Plessey vs. Ferguson decision of "separate but equal." General Conference President J. L. McElhaney

⁴⁸ Douglas W. Johnson, *A Study of Former Central Jurisdiction Church Data 1974-1984* (New York: National Program Division, General Board of Global Ministry the United Methodist Church, 1987), 4-5; "The Sixteen Points," *The General Conference Committee on Regional Conferences and Human Relations* (April 23, 1970), 5.

⁴⁹ Richard T. Schaefer, *Racial and Ethnic Groups*, ninth edition (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc., 2004), 223.

recommended, at a Special Pre-Spring Council meeting that the [Black] Regional Conferences would be organized in the same way as predominately White conferences with no exclusion based on race and that people would not be precluded from involvement or membership because of their race. The Central Jurisdiction was based on the socio-historical process by which racial categories are created, inhibited, transformed, and destroyed a process called racial formation. The Central Jurisdiction was established on a racist social structure.⁵⁰

Another difference between the Methodist Church and the SDA Church is that SDA pastors and workers were and are compensated on similar pay scales based on tithe being evenly dispensed among pastors and workers with comparable years of service. A pastor or worker laboring at a large congregation would receive no more remuneration than pastors or workers with the same years of service serving a small church or congregation. In the United Methodist Church or Methodist Church, the pastors' compensation scale was and still is based on church income. A pastor of a larger congregation would be compensated a lot more than one at a small congregation. Bishops in the Methodist Church remuneration scale are paid much more than are pastors, but in the SDA Church conference presidents receive approximately the same remuneration as pastors of churches.⁵¹

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁵¹ Patricia M.Y. Chang, "Paying the Preacher: Wages and Compensation Among United Methodist Clergy," in *the People Called Methodists: Forms and Reform of Their Life*, 2 vols, eds., William B. Lawrence, Dennis M. Campbell, Russell E. Richey (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), 153-160; Richard W. Schwarz and Floyd Greenleaf, *Light Bearer: A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, revised edition (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2000), 414-417.

A comparison of the Methodist Church and the SDA Church regarding how these organizations furthered ministry indicates no existence of an internship or comparable plan for theology graduates to show their call to ministry in the Methodist Church. The General Conference of SDA's in 1929 voted a uniform internship program for North America for theology graduates wanting to embark upon ministry. The internship program offered a procedure to refurbish the organizational work force and at the same time young theology graduates could display their call to ministry and be introduced to its different aspects.⁵²

A significant ingredient in the church growth and development of the SDA Church was and is the incomparable Edward Earl Cleveland. At only 34 years of age, in 1954, Cleveland became one of the youngest individual ever elected to the General Conference of SDA. Cleveland was elected as an associate ministerial secretary, where he developed into the most effective and impactful evangelist for the SDA Church for more than twenty-three years. Inauspiciously, the Central Jurisdiction [Black] Annual Conferences had no ascribable person as the venerable Edward Earl Cleveland.⁵³ The lack of such a person perhaps throws light on the feeble Central Jurisdiction/Black Annual Conference membership growth rate figure of 34,603 from 1940 to 1964 a growth percentage of 10.22 percent, while the [Black] Regional Conference membership growth rates figure of 47,973 from 1946 to 1970 comprised a growth percentage of 299.02 percent. The SDA

⁵² Richard W. Schwarz and Floyd Greenleaf, *Light Bearer: A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, revised edition (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2000), 387-388, 390-391.

⁵³ Harold L. Lee and Monte Sahlin, *E.E. Cleveland: Evangelist Extraordinary* (Lincoln, N.B.: Center for Creative Ministry, 2006), 11-12, 14-15.

[Black] Regional Conferences membership growth rate was 29 times as great as the Methodist Central Jurisdiction/ [Black] Annual Conferences membership growth rate over a twenty-four year period. The Methodist [Black] Central Jurisdiction/[Black] Annual Conferences income fund figure of 8,912,940 increased by 310.31 percent from 1940 to 1964 and the SDA [Black] Regional Conferences tithe fund figure of \$7,288,231 rose by 922.94 percent from 1946 to 1970. The SDA [Black] Regional Conference tithe fund increased by almost three times the [Black] Central Jurisdiction/ [Black] Annual Conference Income Fund increased during that twenty-four year period.⁵⁴

An examination of the statistical data reveals that the SDA [Black] Regional Conference had a membership growth rate figure of 47,973 or a growth percentage of 299.02 percent from 1946 to 1970 and a White SDA Conferences membership growth figure of 109,419 or a White SDA Conference membership growth rate percentage of 138.99 percent during this twenty-four year period. The [Black] Regional membership growth rate figure and percentage is 2.15 times the White SDA Conferences growth rate. The 1946 to 1970 White SDA Conferences possess a tithe fund figure of \$28,807,555 or a tithe fund percentage increase of 475.62 percent, while the [Black] Regional Conferences have a tithe fund figure \$7,258,231 or a [Black] Regional Conferences tithe percentage increase of 922.94 percent. The [Black] Regional Conferences 1946 to 1970

⁵⁴ To compute the growth and development of membership and income and/or Tithe Funds of the [Black] SDA Regional Conferences/Churches, [Black] Central Jurisdiction/Annual Conferences, and White SDA Conferences, the percentage change formula was utilized. The percentage change formula $\frac{(y^2 - y^1)}{y^1} \times 100$ equal percentage change. The percentage change formula will be employed to calculate the percentages in this research. Percentage Change, "Percentage Change Calculator," available from www.percentage-change.com; Internet; accessed 13 May 2009; numbers employed from Table 1, The Membership Growth Figures on 232-233 and from Table II, Income and Tithe Funds on 234-235 of Chapter III.

tithe fund figure and percentage is 1.94 times or almost 2 times that of White SDA Conferences tithe fund figure percentage. During the period between 1975 and 2000, the [Black] Regional Conferences membership had a growth rate figure of 139,010 and the [Black] Regional Conferences had a membership growth percentage of 161.53 percent. The White SDA Conferences membership growth rate figure was 151,796 and they had a membership growth percentage of 69.61 percent. The [Black] Regional Conferences 1975 to 2000 membership growth rate and percentage is 2.32 times the White SDA Conferences growth rate percentage (the White Conferences membership increased growth rate is attributable to growth in membership of Hispanics and Asians and other minorities). The [Black] Regional Conference's tithe fund figure of \$99,922,629 had a tithe percentage increase of 685.84 percent between 1975 and 2000 tithe fund figure, and the White SDA Conferences tithe fund figure \$308,205,812 had a tithe fund percentage increase of 448.14 percent. The [Black] Regional Conferences 1975 to 2000 tithe fund figure percentage is 1.53 times the White SDA Conferences tithe fund figure percentage.⁵⁵

A comparison of old North American Sustentation Program with the new Regional Conferences Retirement Plan is startling. Under the old North American Sustentation Program, a worker had to work forty years to receive full benefits only if his wife (or her husband) had little income, a worker then would receive maximum benefit of \$1,500 a month. A worker under the Regional Conferences Retirement Plan would be entitled to

⁵⁵ Utilized the percentage change formula and numbers from Table III and Table V, Membership Growth Figures on 244-245, 247-248 and from Table IV and Table VI, Tithe Funds on 245-246, 249-250 from Chapter III.

receive \$2,300 a month, with the wife's income having no impact on the worker's retirement. With the Regional Conferences Retirement plan, a worker could retire at the age of 62 with 30 years of service with full benefits.⁵⁶

The North American Sustentation Plan provides that a worker with forty years of service will receive 59 percent of the worker's last income (38 percent from social security and 21 percent from church sustentation plan). In the Regional Conferences Plan, a worker with 25 years of services would receive 94.25 percent of their highest average income (with 38 percent from social security and 56 percent from the Regional Plan). With the North American Division Plan, if a worker dies first, the spouse would receive 50 percent of the family rate, if the worker dies first under the Regional Retirement Plan, the spouse would receive 66 2/3 percent of retirement income if the worker dies before 62 years of age. Joseph W. McCoy is the architect of the newly defined benefit plan (a plan totally funded by the Regional Conferences) which is the Regional Conferences Retirement Plan. The Regional Conferences Retirement Plan is totally superior to the old sustentation plan or the new defined contribution plan (where workers contribute 4 percent of their yearly salary and local conferences or organizations pay into a fund for the employee).⁵⁷

Both the United Methodist Church through the Black Methodist for Church Renewal approach and the Seventh-day Adventist Church, through the affirmative action

⁵⁶ Frank L. Jones, North American Division Black Caucus Meeting, *Minutes*, "A New Retirement Plan—Comparison of the Two Plans", Capital Plaza, Holiday Inn, Sacramento, CA (August 13, 2001), 2.

⁵⁷ North American Division Black Conference President Council, *Minutes*, Regional Conference Office, Huntsville, Alabama (December 5, 2000), 2; Regional Retirement Board Meeting, *Minutes*, Loma Linda, California (January 29, 2001), 2.

“Sixteen Point Program” (particularly in the North American Division) had achieved integration at the upper echelons on the various commissions, committees, departments, agencies, as well as in administrative offices. The United Methodist Church, unfortunately, failed in comparison to other denominations in developing Black churches and in forming new Black congregations. Particularly, the African American membership in the United Methodist Church decreased by about 140,000 from 1968 to 1991 from around 374,000 down to about 234,000 and a drop occurred in the number of churches or congregations from 2,853 to 2,425 churches. The United Methodist declined in members by 2.3 million during the 1968 to 1991 period, from the 1968 figure of 11 million members down to 8.7 million members in 1991, or a drop in membership percentage rate of 21 percent. In the same period, membership in the North American Division of SDA grew from a membership of 363,746 in 1966 to 717,446 in 1990. Membership figures increased by 353,700 which represents an increase in membership percentage growth of 97.23 percent. The [Black] SDA Regional Conferences membership figures of 51,280 in 1966 and increased to 165,645 members in 1990 resulting in an overall membership growth figure of 114,365 or an increase membership growth percentage of 223 percent. In comparison with the [Black] United Methodist membership figure of about 374,000 in 1968 is the fact that the membership declined to about 234,000 members by 1991, resulting in a membership drop of around 140,000 membership figures or a decline in membership percentage of 37.43 percent. A comparison of the membership percentage decline in [Black] United Methodist Churches was an alarmingly 37.43 percent versus the overall decline percent of 21 percent in the

overall United Methodist Church. This decrease is contrary to the increase in membership percentage in the SDA Church in North America of 97.23 percent and the membership percentage for [Black] Regional Conferences of 223 percent.⁵⁸

Another difference between United Methodism methodology and Seventh-day Adventist methods is that Methodists have concentrated on being assimilated into the culture. Church Historian Thomas Edward Frank argues that the reason for Methodist decline in membership was “that the United Methodist has been too much assimilated into the wider American culture.” The fact still remains that the most segregated hour of the week in American society is at eleven o’clock on Saturdays or Sundays when people attend their selective churches.⁵⁹

As Frank noted, the Central Jurisdiction “embodied the fatal flaw of an apartheid system, segregating African American churches into a separate, non-regional (geographical) ‘church within a church.’” The advantage of the Central Jurisdiction was that “the Central Jurisdiction did provide a coherent organization for supporting African American institutions and developing lay and clergy leadership. The problem with the Central Jurisdiction was that “much of the energy...was diverted to the political task of achieving racial unity-a task completed legally in the 1968-1972 quadrennium, but yet to be fulfilled in many ways today.”⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Percentage Change, “Percentage Change Calculator,” available from www.percentagechange.com; Internet; accessed 13 May 2009; Thomas Edward Frank, *Polity, Practice and the Mission of the United Methodist Church* (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1997), 24; Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary, Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream*, 2 ed. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2007), 119.

⁵⁹ Frank, *Polity, Practice and Mission of the United Methodist Church*, 26.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 110.

The Central Jurisdiction, an admittedly racist social structure with all its faults and failings, showed an increased membership growth rate figure of 34,603 from 1940-1964, and a growth percentage increase of 10.22 percent. While the [Black] United Methodist Annual Conferences/Churches after being absorbed or assimilated into [White] United Methodist Annual Conferences experienced a decreased membership figure of about 140,000 from 1968 to 1991, and a membership percentage decline of 37.43 percent. [Black] Regional Conferences had an increase membership growth figure of 114,365 from 1966 to 1990, an increase membership growth percentage of 223 percent.⁶¹

A number of Blacks and some White SDA have come to recognize that the “melting pot” and/or “assimilation” model ideal in which ethnic groups would be blended together with differences assimilated by the predominately White Protestant view of Christian civilization, was not reality. The Adventists in contrast to the United Methodist have realized that numerous Americans are against cultural assimilation and want to maintain their cultural heritage. Dr. Calvin B. Rock, a former president of Oakwood College and a retired General Vice-president of the General Conference makes the case for cultural pluralism over cultural assimilation of Anglo-conformity and the melting pot theories of assimilation in America. Cultural pluralism suggests that different groups in a society possess mutual respect for one another’s culture, a regard that permits minorities to express their culture and not be subject to bias or antagonism. The “cultural assimilation” model of assimilation can explain the significant drop in the Black sector of United Methodism and the Seventh-day Adventist philosophy and approach of cultural

⁶¹ Percentage Change, “Percentage Change Calculator,” available from www.percentagechange.com; Internet; accessed 13 May 2009.

pluralism provide a plausible rationale for the extraordinary growth which [Black] Regional Conferences encountered in membership in the North America Division of SDA's. [Black] Regional Conferences attest to the fact that the fastest growing churches in America are culturally pluralistic churches that celebrate the cultural heritage of a specific racial or ethnic group (for example, Africans, African Americans, Asians, Hispanics and West Indians). As Social Historian Richard Schaefer states, "The United States has never come close to being integrated or truly overcome segregation whether in the schools, housing, healthcare, or religious worship."⁶² It appears that pluralistic [Black] Regional Conferences acknowledge that fact, whereas the assimilationist and integrationist [Black] United Methodists have not, to their own disadvantage.

Major J. Jones stated in his exploration of the African American place in the United Methodist community that "one wonders whether, if the Central Jurisdiction had survived the 1960s, would Black people have voted it out of existence in the 1970s, or even in our current times? Had the leadership been able to foresee the future, they might not have pushed for the brand of integration that was then conceptualized. Racial and ethnic pluralism was not then the goal, but rather an integration that was conceived in terms of giving up much and being received by many—almost at any price." The circumstances concerning the [Black] United Methodist Church conclusively demonstrates that the assimilationist approach has not been achieved, even with the election of Barack Obama as president of the United States.⁶³

⁶² Schaefer, *Racial and Ethnic Groups*, 30.

⁶³ Major J. Jones, "The Central Jurisdiction: Passive Resistance," in *Heritage and Hope: The African-American Presence in United Methodism*, 206.

The SDA's have been less progressive with the place of women in the organization. From the Merikay Silvers case in which Silver experienced gender discrimination and had to file a lawsuit against Pacific Press Publishing Association for violating the gender clause of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the church's failure to address the issue of equal pay for equal work is a poignant case of being regressive. A class action suit forced the SDA Church to stop its discrimination practices and pay more than the \$60,000 in an out of court settlement to Silver's and \$77,000 to Lorna Tobler to compensate her for back wages and benefits, and the court ordered the Pacific Press to pay its female workers \$600,000 for back wages and benefits, which resulted in ending gender compensation differences in the SDA Church organization. The other women's issues such as the ordination of women have languished and still need to be fully addressed by the SDA Church. While the Sixteen Point Program dealt with racial bias, it did not confront discrimination against women and the issues of women being ordained to the gospel ministry. The SDA's Church position vis a vis woman has been mixed and inconsistent and showed that women are not really welcome beyond the glass and marble ceilings that are and have been placed over them. The United Methodist Church, has unlike the SDA Church, faced the transformation in gender ties and the requests of women for more leadership positions in the church by voting in 1976 a permanent General Commission on the Status and Role of Women to confront all women's issues.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Merikay McLeod [Silvers], *Betrayal: The Shattering Sex Discrimination Case of Silver vs Pacific Press Publishing Association* (Loma Linda, CA: Mar Hills Publications, 1985), 338-339; Schwartz and Greenleaf, *Light Bearers: A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, 465-468; Frank, *Polity, Practice, and the Mission of the United Methodist Church*, 89.

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